

Starrk's
Prayer-Book

Mary Jane Sells



STARCK'S PRAYER-BOOK

From the German Edition of Dr. F. Pieper

Translated and Edited

by

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PREFACE.

Johann Friedrich Starck, a favorite author of evangelical Germany in the era of Pietism, has more than any other writer of devotional literature maintained his hold on the hearts of practising (not merely professing!) Christians. Even Arnd's *True Christianity*, booksellers assert, does not equal the influence which Starck still exerts on thousands of Christians by his PRAYER-BOOK.

The leading facts of his life are these: He was born October 10, 1680, at Hildesheim in Hanover. His father had formerly been a citizen of the old imperial city of Frankfurt-on-the-Main. After completing the regular course of studies at the *Gymnasium* at Hildesheim, young Starck entered the University of Giessen, where his inner life received permanent impressions in the devotional exercises (*Erbauungsstunden*) which his theological teachers May and Lange conducted with a select company of students. After his graduation from the university, Starck had to wait a considerable time before he was called to a pastorate. This time he spent partly as assistant in the evangelical church at Geneva, where Reformed influence was dominant, partly as instructor in his ancestral home city of Frankfurt. In 1715 he was called to the pastorate of Sachsenhausen, and in 1723 he became pastor, first of the Barfuesserkirche, then of the Spitalkirche at Frankfurt. In 1742 he became a member of the Consistory, and labored with unbroken strength as preacher, pastor, and author till a great age; he died July 17, 1756.

Starck's predecessor in Frankfurt had been Spener, "the father of Pietism," and it fell to Starck's lot to water what Spener had sowed. For thirty years he conducted "private" devotional exercises on Sunday afternoons. These exercises, which were attended by a number of earnest souls, were private only in as far as they were distinct from the regular public services at the church. At

these exercises Starck endeavored to impress the evangelical truths of Christianity, the priceless privileges of the grace of Christ and the Christian ordinances, and the practical duties of a consistent Christian life on his individual hearers with true pastoral tact, and became to many a spiritual pedagogue and guide of great wisdom and power. Starck had a Savior's eye and heart for the lowly and forsaken, and sought them out for special instructions. For servants who could not attend the public services he wrote many an edifying tract; the poor and needy found in him not only a sympathetic adviser, but also a ready, unwearied, and generous helper.

Starck loved nothing sensational, nothing that was for mere display in matters of religion. Christian life, to him, was real and earnest, to be conducted in a sober mind. He was always bent on its practical applications to every pursuit and action, and on enlisting really the whole of a person in the service of the Master. While he maintained the confessional position of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and rejoiced to be a member of it, his teaching was tinged with the peculiarities of the Pietistic tendency. To mention only one of these, the sharp line of demarcation between justification and sanctification which is seen in the writings of the apostle — that line which divides the gracious forgiveness of sin for Christ, an act exclusively of God, from the godly life which follows wherever the absolution of the Gospel has been accepted by a penitent and believing heart — sometimes becomes faint in Starck's writings. Thus what God alone does, and what the regenerate child of God does by the prompting of the Holy Spirit, are not always kept strictly apart. However, this defect occurs only occasionally, perhaps least in the PRAYER-BOOK, and there are so many sections in Starck's writings that are entirely free from error that Starck himself supplies the needed correction for his occasional deviations from the straight path of the sound doctrine.

When Dr. F. Pieper, years ago, examined the PRAYER-BOOK with a view to applying, wherever needed, this self-correction of Starck, this was done with no sacrilegious hand, but really to secure

for Starck a fuller reward of his faithful labors for a sincere and zealous Christian life. The reviser really helped Starck to speak his full Christian mind everywhere, and to discard what was of inferior value or even misleading in his presentation of Christian truths. The chief object, of course, was to secure the minds of less trained Christian readers against false impressions which they might receive from a misstatement in their favorite.

The same reasons have prompted the present translation of the PRAYER-BOOK into English. It was begun ten years ago, but was interrupted for quite a number of years at the end of the First Division, partly because the translator lost the aid of his stenographer, partly because the work at Concordia Seminary grew to unusual dimensions. That he was at all enabled to complete it is due in no small measure to the help of the Seminary Board, which during the last two years has engaged a stenographer, who is at the service of members of the faculty. Grateful acknowledgment for this aid is herewith made.

The translation is made from the German edition of Dr. Pieper of 1900. Comparison was possible to the translator only with the editions published by Kohler and the German Literary Board. Each of these editions has its distinct merit, the latter excelling by its faithful adherence to the original, its apt renderings, and happy paraphrases. Both renderings have proved helpful to the translator, though he decided to prepare an entirely new translation from the original, and even at the risk of being faulted with Germanisms permitted the peculiar style and thought connection of the original to be reflected in the translation. At times, too, the exact thought of the original required a return to Luther's translation of the Bible. Nor has the use of texts from apocryphal books which Starck has used with power been altogether avoided. To guard against a misconception, the translator would state here that he does not regard these books as inspired, but, with Luther, considers some of the apocryphal books instructive reading-matter. Nor does he feel any Puritanic qualms in such use.

The reproduction of Starck's poetry has been attempted, so far as the present translator is aware, in only one instance, and that with indifferent effect, as was to be expected. The poetry for the present edition has been gathered from many sources, not a few of them at the present time unknown to the editor; and though it lacks that direct connection with the meditational portions preceding which is seen in Starck's poetry, it is hoped that it may be found to possess value also independently of the particular sections to which it is found attached.

The four last divisions or "books" of the PRAYER-BOOK were prepared during the distressing years of the late European war. This work proved to the editor a great mental and spiritual relief. It was a luxury to spend many an hour in the company of a person on whom the spirit of prayer has been poured out in such abundant measure as on Starck. It was faith-confirming and inspiring work which the translator was permitted to do. He can offer no better wish to the readers of this book, now that it starts on its voyage to the increasing English homes and hearts in our church community, than this, that the light and strength, the cheer and comfort that has come to him out of the pages of this book in many a weary and despondent day may stream into the hearts of the readers, even though they be free, as the editor hopes they are, from all weariness and despondency.

W. H. T. DAU.

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 With Thee, Lord, would I cast my lot, 330.
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BOOK I.

For Use in Health.

FIRST PART.

Morning, Noon, and Evening Devotions.

The Believing Christian Prepares for Divine Worship.

EXHORTATION.

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His Temple.

Ps. 27, 4.

Immediately after the Fall, God, in His wisdom, directed the first man, Adam, to offer sacrifices. His children, Cain and Abel, were, in turn, directed by their father to do the same. Their sacrifice is expressly mentioned in Gen. 4, 3. 4. These sacrifices were not offered in silence; but those offering them confessed their sins, prayed God for forgiveness, and declared their faith in the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ, who was to shed His blood for men like the animals offered in sacrifice. Yea, at such sacrifices they praised God for the benefits received from Him, and also proclaimed the name of the Lord. The Patriarchs retained this form of divine worship, until in the desert God commanded the Ark of the Covenant to be erected, which afterwards furnished the pattern for Solomon's Temple.

Moreover, in the Old Testament God singled out the seventh day as a day of rest and commanded that day to be kept holy

before every other. In its external meaning this commandment does not concern the Christians in the New Testament; for like other ordinances of the Old Testament which were restricted to particular forms, persons, seasons, and localities, this, too, is an entirely external affair, and in the New Testament Christians have been given freedom by Christ regarding all such matters. Nevertheless, in the exercise of our Christian liberty we Christians in the New Testament also keep festival days and days of rest, chiefly Sunday, mainly for this reason, that we may find time and opportunity to attend divine service, that we may gather with our fellow-Christians to hear God's Word and have it expounded to us, and to praise God with our hymns and prayers.

On the arrival of a day of this kind, a believing Christian should (1) free his mind from earthly matters and cease from labor. (2) He should prepare himself by prayer for the coming Sunday, and praise God for the many blessings he has received during the week. (3) He should look up in his Bible or hymn-book the particular Gospel- or Epistle-text which will be explained in the sermon on that Sunday, and meditate it, and in this manner prepare himself for reverently hearing the divine Word.

PRAYER.

Gracious and merciful God! I come before Thy holy countenance this day with praise and thanksgiving, because Thou hast graciously kept me during the past six days, and hast bountifully blessed the labor of my hands. Thou hast preserved my going out and my coming in. Thou hast kept me in all my ways, and hast shown me much kindness in body and soul; for all of which I praise and magnify Thee with all my heart. Away now with earthly business! Away with cares! I will forget things past; I lay down the burden of all my labors and occupations, and turn my mind to heaven alone, to my God, that I may rejoice in Him.

O gracious God, grant that I may spend the coming Sunday in Thy fear and in Thy grace. Keep

me from evil company, lest Satan by his wicked agents prevent me from attending divine worship, and help me to refuse following after his enticements. Guard me, lest I spend this day in idleness, indolence, wantonness, amusements, and sins, and thus inflict the greatest harm on my soul. Grant me Thy Holy Spirit that I may gladly hear and learn Thy Word this day. When Thy Word is being preached, open my heart that I may give heed to it and receive it into my heart, and lay it up therein as a precious treasure. Help me to build myself up this Sunday in my Christian faith, and to grow in the knowledge of the truth. Grant that the Word which I hear at church may change and sanctify me. As I grow in years, grant that I may also grow in the inward man, in faith and piety. Grant me grace to become a new creature, and to be and remain a living member in the body of my Lord Jesus. Grant that I may reverently close my worship and carefully treasure up what I have learned. Grant me grace to be ever mindful of the Word which I have heard, that I may walk, speak, live, and act accordingly, and thus prove that I am not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the Word. Grant me to keep Sabbath every day in this manner until Thou wilt bring me into the everlasting joy of heaven, to the Sabbath without end, through Jesus Christ, my only Redeemer and Savior.

Lord, open Thou my heart to hear, And by Thy Word to me draw near; Let me Thy Word still pure retain, Let me Thy child and heir remain. Thy Word doth move the inmost heart, Thy Word doth perfect health impart, Thy Word my soul with joy doth bless, Thy Word brings peace and blessedness. Glory to God, the Father, Son, And Holy Spirit, Three in One! To Thee, O blessed Trinity, Be praise throughout eternity! Amen.

HYMN.

My Book! my Book! my grand old Book! by inspiration giv'n!
 Thy every page from age to age reveals the path to heav'n;
 My Lamp of Light! in nature's night thy unobscured ray
 Has turned the gloom of death and tomb to everlasting day.

My Chart! my Chart! my changeless Chart! by thee I guide my
 bark,
 A simple child on ocean wild, o'er mountain billows dark;
 By thee I steer in safe career, with canvas all unfurled,
 And onward sail before the gale to yonder blissful world.

My Staff! my Staff! my trusty Staff! I'll grasp thee in my hand,
 As faint and weak on Pisgah's peak I view the Promised Land;
 Not sadly told, as one of old, to see, but not explore,
 My hold I'll keep through Jordan's deep till safe on Canaan's shore.

My Sword! my Sword! my two-edged Sword! by thy unerring
 might,
 I deal to foe the deadly blow in faith's unequal fight;
 Thy tempered blade that lent me aid in every conflict past
 Shall make me "more than conqueror, through Him who loved,"
 at last.

My Book! my Book! my grand old Book! Heav'n speed thee on
 thy way
 From pole to pole, as ages roll, the harbinger of day,
 Till Christ, "the Light," shall banish night from this "terrestrial
 ball,"
 And earth shall see her Jubilee, and God be all in all!

Exhortation to Morning Prayer on Sunday.

Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation.
 Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God: for
 unto Thee will I pray. *Ps. 5, 1. 2.*

Our whole life should be spent in nothing else than prayer
 and thanksgiving. Every day we should call upon God in prayer
 for His blessing, aid and assistance, and grace; and when we
 have obtained our requests, we should return heartfelt thanks.
 Accordingly, when you awake from sleep in the morning, believing

Christian, first of all, raise your eyes heavenward. Do not at once think of your business and work; do not immediately hurry after some gain. First kneel down, return thanks to God, and commend yourself to His gracious protection. Do not imagine that you lose too much time by devoting a brief half hour in the morning to prayer, to reading a chapter of the Bible or of some devotional book. O no! The time which you spend in prayer will yield you a thousandfold blessing in your labor, and what you have read will be like honey to your mouth all the day.

Hence, when you awake and arise hale and hearty in the morning, consider, (1) that many good Christians, who are probably more pious than you, have spent the past night in anguish and sorrow, in pain and sickness, in terror and great unrest, while you have not experienced any of these things. Consider, (2) that others have during the night suffered misfortune, damage, danger, and tribulation, while you lack nothing. Thank God for His protection. (3) Pray to God at the break of day to keep you in His grace during the day, that you may commit no sin either against Him or against your neighbor during the day. (4) Pray God to be at your side during the day, to keep and bless you in your occupation and in the pursuit of your calling. Yea, (5) surrender yourself to God that you may remain in His love during the entire day, speak of Him, have Him in your thoughts, and not offend Him knowingly and willingly. Finally, do not doubt that the Lord will graciously hear your sighing and prayer, and will during the day give and grant to you whatsoever will be profitable and tend to the salvation of your body and soul.

MORNING PRAYER ON SUNDAY.

Lord, be pleased to hear my voice early. Early will I come into Thy presence and will give heed to Thee, O gracious God. Thou art worthy to receive praise and glory and honor. Who would not fear Thee, King of the nations; who would not honor Thee, O loving Father? I come before Thee in this morning hour and give Thee humble thanks because during this night Thou hast been a bulwark round about me and mine, and Thou hast again renewed

to me Thy goodness and faithfulness. Be with me and protect me also this day in all my ways. Grant that this day, in particular, may be a day of edification and refreshing to my soul. According to Thy pitying love Thou hast given to men Thy precious Word, and hast ordained that it should be publicly preached. Oh, do enlighten, sanctify, and instruct my soul that I may gather treasures which shall comfort me in danger and death, in crosses and trials, and which neither moth nor rust do corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.

I am glad because I have Thy promise that we shall go into the house of the Lord, and that my feet shall stand within Thy gates, O Jerusalem. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His holy Temple. My God, it shall be my delight to-day to hear Thy Word, to be built up in Thee, to sing hymns of praise and thanks to Thy glory, to pray fervently, and to make my heart an offering to Thee. How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul rejoiceth in the living God.

Grant that I may not be a forgetful hearer, but may become a doer of the Word. Open my heart as Thou didst Lydia's that I may receive the seed of Thy Word with joy. Then seal my heart, that Satan may not rob me of Thy Word. Grant that I may to-day lay a firm foundation for my Christian faith, for the knowledge of Jesus Christ, for my trust, for my charity, for my self-denial, and for my becoming dead to the world. Grant that

I may ponder Thy Word during the entire week, that I may practise it, and bring forth good fruits. Guard me against temptations, lest, when Satan assails me by his instruments, I be drawn into the sinful practise of the world, and thus bring a grievous curse upon me, which might oppress me during the entire week. Oh, be pleased to accept my worship at the church and at home, my praying, my hearing, my reading and singing. Be Thou, O Jesus, Thyself my Teacher, that I may grow in the inner man; yea, dwell in me by faith until I shall be inseparably united to Thee above.

O Holy Spirit, enter in, And in our hearts Thy work begin,
Thy temple deign to make us. Sun of my soul, Thou Light divine,
Around and in us brightly shine, To joy and gladness wake us,
That we To Thee Truly living, To Thee giving Prayer unceasing,
Still may be in love increasing. Amen.

HYMN.

Day of sweetness! day of rest!
By our Lord and Savior blest!
Touch our lips, that we may sing,
Glory be to Thee, O King!

In Thy sacred courts we stand
Bordering on the Promised Land:
May this be Thy time of power,
Even this Thy gracious hour.

Thou didst take away the gloom
From the weepers at Thy tomb;
So do Thou our eyes unseal
And Thy living self reveal.

Joyfully may we go on
Toward the Land where Thou hast gone
To prepare for us a place
In the mansions of Thy grace.

Let this Sabbath be a link
In Thy love's eternal chain
That will lead us o'er the brink
Of the world to glory's plain.

Day of sweetness! day of rest!
Of the peace of God possessed,
May we feel that we have been
Near to heaven, and looking in.

The Believing Christian Gladly Hears and Learns God's Word on Sunday.

EXHORTATION.

How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. *Ps. 84, 1. 2.*

The Word of God is the greatest treasure which God has given to men on earth; for God's Word is to lost sinners the Word of Life; it brings us out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life. Besides, God has shown us His particular favor in this, that He has ordained the holy office of the ministry, to the end that His Word may be preached and explained in public to all who gather to hear it. God has promised to bestow a special blessing on the public preaching of His Word. All those who reverently hear the Word shall share this blessing.

When the day arrives which the Christian Church has appointed for the public preaching of the Word, a Christian must not only cease from his work and be idle; for people who are not Christians can also do that; but a Christian must let this be his chief concern, to hear and learn God's Word. At whatever time men are engaged in hearing and learning God's Word, a true Sabbath is being kept. If this is not done, the day cannot be called a Christian Sabbath.

These things being so, a true Christian (1) should be careful not to spend the day in sloth and idleness. (2) He should be careful not to devote this day to surfeiting, drunkenness, and wantonness. (3) He should be careful not to omit hearing God's Word through greed or frivolousness. Rest assured that much

depends on the proper manner of keeping Sunday. A great blessing is attached to it. Who knows the reason why many men are under a curse and go without God's blessing? Our forefathers used to say: "As the Word of God you treat, He will treat your bread and meat." In conclusion, having heard God's Word, we should keep it in an honest and good heart; we should live in accordance with it; we should at once reduce its rules of life to practise; and at the same time we should gather a supply of comforting, instructive, and powerful Scripture-passages, which may be of service to us in tribulation and death.

PRAYER.

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. I thank Thee, O God, for Thy manifold blessings, which Thou hast bestowed upon me this day. On a Sunday, Jesus, my Savior, rose from the grave, and the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the Apostles. Therefore it is proper that on this day I call to mind my redemption through Jesus Christ, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, who was shed upon me abundantly in Holy Baptism.

I thank Thee for Thy holy and pure Word, which on this day has been preached according to Thy ordinance for the instruction and the edification of my soul. I thank Thee for all the bodily and the spiritual blessings which I have received from Thy fatherly hand during my life. I thank Thee because Thou hast guided, led, preserved me from my youth, and hast shown me many favors in body and soul. Who can number all Thy benefits?

However, this day shall be not only a day of thanksgiving, but also a day of prayer for me. I pray Thee, my God and Father, grant that

I may spend this day in Thy fear. Keep me from temptations, vain thoughts, and evil company. Oh, that every artery in me were a tongue and every drop of blood a voice, to praise and glorify Thee, the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! Oh, that not an hour would pass in which I do not spread abroad Thy praise!

Seal the Word which I have heard in my heart. Grant that I may diligently ponder it, and govern my life and walk accordingly. And as I have now grown to be a week older, grant that I may increase in knowledge of Thee, in love and piety, and that I may grow in the inward man. I pray Thee for the gift of Thy Holy Spirit. Grant that He may put me in mind of Thy Word during this week and the entire time of my life; and govern, guide, and lead me. Bestow Thy blessing upon my labor and employment, and grant that I may continue to live in Thy grace the rest of my days and years, until I shall at last reach heaven, where I may, with thanksgiving and prayer, keep the eternal Sabbath.

This is the day the Lord hath made; He calls the hours His own; Let heaven rejoice, let earth be glad, And praise surround the throne. Amen.

SUNDAY HYMN.

O day of rest and gladness!
O day of joy and light!
O balm of care and sadness!
Most beautiful, most bright!
On thee the high and lowly
Through ages joined in tune.
Sing, Holy, holy, holy,
To God the great Triune.

On thee, at the Creation,
The light first had its birth;
On thee, for our salvation,
Christ rose from depths of earth;
On thee our Lord victorious
The Spirit sent from heaven;
And thus on thee, most glorious
A triple light was given.

To-day on weary nations
The heavenly manna falls;
To holy convocations
The silver trumpet calls,
Where Gospel-light is glowing
With pure and radiant beams,
And living waters flowing
With soul-refreshing streams.

New graces ever gaining
On this our day of rest,
We reach the rest remaining
To spirits of the blest.
To Holy Ghost be praises,
To Father and to Son;
The Church her voice upraises
To Thee, blest Three in One.

The Believing Christian Considers the Daily and the Eternal Sabbath.

EXHORTATION.

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest. *Heb. 4, 9, 11.*

God had strictly enjoined the Jews from doing any work on the Sabbath-day. So strictly and rigidly did God maintain the Sabbath in the Old Testament that He caused the person who was gathering wood on the Sabbath to be stoned, as we read Numbers 15. This commandment does not concern us Christians in the New Testament, as St. Paul declares to the Colossians, chapter 2.

However, the Sabbath of the Jews was a shadow, or type, of the true, spiritual Sabbath, which Christians keep every day. Christians celebrate a daily, or spiritual Sabbath. It does not consist in ceasing from work and giving oneself over entirely to idleness, but by the daily Sabbath we understand a person's ceasing from sin. This means that, as the Jews by God's command rested from their manual labor, so a Christian by God's command ceases every day from wantonness and malice. He is careful not to speak evil against God and his neighbors, not to do evil, either alone or in company with other persons, not to allow himself to be misled by others, but to keep his soul unspotted from the world.

While, on the one hand, he avoids these things, he is zealous, on the other hand, to remember God frequently while he is engaged in his work. He earnestly implores God to grant him His governing and succoring Holy Spirit. That is the spiritual and daily Sabbath which a child of God should keep all the time.

A person who is eager to keep this daily Sabbath can rest assured that he will keep the eternal Sabbath in the life everlasting, which consists in this, that the believers and the chosen children of God are delivered from all bodily labor, from all crosses and tribulations, from all sins; and behold God face to face, are occupied with Him, and praise and serve Him without end. Oh, what a holy and glorious Sabbath! This Sabbath will never be disturbed. However, it will be obtained only by those who continue in faith and in the love of Jesus unto death.

PRAYER.

Holy and merciful God, I hear Thy holy Word, by which Thou hast made me Thy beloved child and hast delivered me from the kingdom of the devil. Therefore I remember on this day the daily spiritual Sabbath. I call to mind that I must cease from sin and must consecrate my body and soul, yea, my entire life to Thee. Henceforth, my God, my daily labor shall by Thy grace consist in doing Thy will, not mine, in expelling, by Thy power, evil lusts and thoughts, in order that Thou alone mayest rest in me, and enlighten and sanctify me more and

more. O God, grant that this spiritual Sabbath of my heart may never be disturbed. Pray Thou within my heart; sing Thou within my heart; teach Thou within my heart. Thus my heart will be a temple consecrated to Thee. And when I have finished the days of my life according to Thy counsel, and at the same time have finished the spiritual Sabbath, O God, let me enter upon the heavenly, eternal Sabbath. There Thy saints shall in everlasting rest and in blessed heavenly joy praise Thee in the temple of glory. There I shall join with all angels and cherubim in singing, Holy, holy, holy to Thee. O my God, grant that I may obtain that happiness.

There is joy beyond our telling, Where so many saints have gone;
Thousands, thousands there are dwelling, Worshiping before the throne,
There the seraphim are shining, Evermore in chorus joining:
"Holy, holy, holy, Lord! Triune God, for aye adored!"
Amen.

HYMN.

In the covert of His presence,
'Neath His overshadowing hand,
We may find a sacred pleasance
In awaiting Christ's command.

Far away the things that madden,
Far their vanity and noise,
May the Holy Spirit gladden
Waiting hours with heavenly joys.

In this time of holy resting
May our strength become renewed,
Not a care the heart molesting
In its gracious quietude.

Can the soul be sad or lonely
In Thy company, O Christ?
Looking to Thee, and Thee only,
Keeping with Thee constant tryst?

Life amid serenest quiet
Like a brooklet flows along,
Undisturbed by tempest riot,
Singing hope's expectant song.

Blessed are the green oases
Here and there for pilgrims stored,
As they follow in the traces
Of the footprints of the Lord!

EVENING PRAYER FOR SUNDAY.

Lord, abide with me; for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent. O Thou living and almighty God, Thy works are past finding out, Thy goodness which Thou showest to the children of men is past utterance! I can tell of Thy grace and truth, of Thy love and mercy; for Thou hast shown me on the day which is now spent much kindness in body and soul. Thou hast fed my soul with the bread of life and hast given me to drink from the living fountain. Thy Word has been sweeter to my mouth than honey and the honeycomb. Oh, let Thy Word be a light on my way all the days of my life, that I may order my walk in accordance with it; then I shall not stumble, or fall from Thy grace.

Thou hast also been my Deliverer, my Succorer, in temporal affairs and hast suffered me to live in good health until this evening. I am not worthy of all Thy mercies which Thou hast bestowed on me. Come to my side, O Thou my Protector, now that my weary limbs lie down to rest; guard me, and embrace me with Thy sheltering arms. Let me ever be a light in the Lord, and let me have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Grant that Thy Word which I have heard and learned

may in the future spring up within me as a holy seed, and that its fruits may be perceived in my life, by my godliness, by my fear of God, by my being dead unto the world and consecrated to Thee. Be Thou my Protection and my Shade against the heat of affliction and the fiery darts of Satan. The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Avert from me and mine conflagrations, floods, and every misfortune, and let all who are in sorrow, sickness, or on the point of death enjoy Thy rich grace. Then shall our mouth early on the morrow be filled with Thy praise, and we shall publish Thy goodness, which Thou alone hast shown us in body and soul.

If I have not heard Thy Word with such zeal as I should, forgive me, and do not on that account withdraw Thy grace from me. During the coming week cause me to be entirely renewed; grant me new love and desire for Thee, and new eagerness to serve and obey Thee. Grant that I may avoid and flee the sins which I have committed during the past week, in order that everybody may see that I have not heard Thy Word in vain. Help me diligently to ponder that I have an immortal soul, in order that I may be more concerned about my soul than about my body. O my God, I am turning my eyes toward my resting-place; in doing so I remember my grave, where I shall rest until on the last day Thou wilt raise me up with joy unto life everlasting. Go, then, my body, into Thy chamber and rest; but thou, O my soul, enter into the wounds of Jesus.

Though my weary eyes are closing, And my senses fall asleep,
Still my soul, on Thee reposing, Ever must its vigils keep. Let
my spirit longingly Always dream, my God, of Thee, Firmly unto
Thee e'er cleaving, E'en in sleep Thy grace receiving. Amen.

. HYMN.

Glory to Thee, my God, this night,
For all the blessings of the light;
Keep me, O keep me, King of kings,
Under Thine own almighty wings!

Forgive me, Lord, for Thy dear Son,
The ill that I this day have done,
That with the world, myself, and Thee,
I, ere I sleep, at peace may be.

Teach me to live, that I may dread
The grave as little as my bed;
Teach me to die, that so I may
With joy behold the Judgment Day.

O may my soul on Thee repose,
And may sweet sleep my eyelids close!
Let no ill dream disturb my rest,
No powers of darkness me molest.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!

The Believing Christian Returns Thanks to God after Hearing the Divine Word.

EXHORTATION.

Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your
own selves. *Jas. 1, 22.*

All divine blessings are misused by the children of the world.
This applies also to the hearing of the divine Word. There is
a great difference in this respect between the children of the world
and the true children of God. (1) The children of the world
imagine that they may devote Sunday to their customary wanton-

ness and pleasures. They hold the view — which, however, is utterly false — that, being at leisure, they may seek carnal enjoyment. (2) The children of the world, at best, go to church in the morning to observe a religious form, but in the afternoon they go to sinful pleasures, and come home late filled with vain thoughts, sinful dissipations, and worldly follies, yes, maybe even drunk. (3) The children of the world do not heed the Word that was preached to them. When you ask them on Monday what benefit they have derived from attending church, what they have heard, what they have learned, they can name nothing. The devil has at once taken away the Word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved, Luke 8, 12. (4) And even when they do still remember a few things, they do not reduce them to practise. In the Old Testament the Lord chose for the sacrifice such animals as chewed the cud; and He loves those most who ruminate and ponder the Word which they have heard or read, who draw from the same new nourishment, strength, and vitality, and are thus built up unto life everlasting.

PRAYER.

O God, plenteous in grace, how can I sufficiently thank Thee; how can I sufficiently praise and glorify Thee, because Thou hast granted me life so that I have been able to celebrate this Sunday? Thou hast caused me to-day to hear Thy holy Word, and to understand how I should believe rightly, live piously, and finally die saved. Thou hast revealed to me Thy gracious will. Thou hast taught me what things to shun and what to do. Oh, indeed, Thou hast not left Thyself without witness, so that all are without excuse. Thou givest us Thy holy Word and Thy holy Sacraments, that we should use them as means of grace for our salvation. Thy Holy Spirit would by these means teach, enlighten, sanctify, strengthen, and confirm us in the faith.

O merciful God, keep me from being a forgetful hearer and make me a doer of Thy Word. Of

what benefit is all hearing to me, if I do not act accordingly? Therefore, O God, seal to my heart what I have heard and read. Make Thy Word in me quick, powerful, and energetic. O Thou Keeper of the door, close my heart as soon as the Word of Life has entered it for my edification, lest Satan rob me of it and I must go home empty. Grant that I may take warning, O God, at the example of many thousands of men, who hear Thy Word, but are not converted, do not become more godly, nor put away their malice, their mischievous doings and their sinful habits, but rather grow more wicked and bold, and remain so. What are such people profited by their churchgoing, their singing, their hearing, their praying? Will not the Word condemn them the more, because they have heard the will of the Lord, have known it, and yet have not done accordingly?

O my God, grant that I may become more pious and godly this week. Grant that I may daily ponder the Word which I have heard, that I may talk of it to my household, that I may rejoice in it, and always do accordingly. I have heard from Thy holy Word that I must be meek, humble, and merciful: grant me grace that I may always be mindful of this, and that I may never lapse into wrath, or be revengeful, proud, and unmerciful. Grant that I may love my enemies, deny myself, and do good to the poor and afflicted. I have been told that I must strive against my evil lusts and thoughts, deny myself, put off the old man, and on the other hand, put on the new man, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world: grant me strength and ability that I may daily practise these virtues and may become proficient in them. And

although I may in the beginning discover in me much weakness, grant that I may follow after holiness, and may more and more purify myself from all contaminations of the flesh and the spirit.

Oh, let me do with Thy holy Word what the children of the world do with their earthly treasures: let me lock it away safely and secure it. Grant me strength also to keep in my heart, as a precious and cherished treasure, Thy holy truths, Thy precious doctrines of faith, Thy powerful exhortations unto holiness of life. Yea, grant that I may daily increase my hoard of them, in order that in all difficult situations, in crosses, in affliction, in sickness, yea, in the hour of death, I may again and again take from them suitable texts for my comfort. Aye, grant me, O my God, that I may daily increase in stature, wisdom and piety, in the fear of God, in the knowledge of Thy will, and in favor with Thee and men.

Almighty God, Thy Word is cast Like seed into the ground;
Now let the dew of heaven descend, And righteous fruits abound.
Let not the foe of Christ and man This holy seed remove; But
give it root in every heart To bring forth fruits of love. Let not
the world's deceitful cares The rising plant destroy; But let it
yield a hundredfold The fruits of peace and joy. Oft as the
precious seed is sown, Thy quick'ning grace bestow That all whose
souls the truth receive Its grace and power may know. Amen.

HYMN.

Thank God for the Bible whose clear shining ray
Has lighted our path, and turned night into day;
Its wonderful treasures have never been told,
More precious than rubies, set round with pure gold.

Thank God for the Bible! in sickness or health
It brings richer comforts than honor or wealth,
Its blessings are boundless, an infinite store;
We may drink at its fountain, and thirst nevermore.

Thank God for the Bible sent down from above,
Revealing to mortals God's infinite love;
A fathomless sea with its bright shining shore
Where the glorified dwell and are safe evermore.

Thank God for the Bible—rich treasures untold
Are laid up in store in its city of gold,
That beautiful home of the saved and the blessed
Where no sorrow can come, where the weary find rest.

Thank God for the Bible! how dark is the night
Where no ray from its pages sheds forth its pure light;
No Jesus, no Bible, no haven of rest—
Oh, how could we live, were our lives so unblest!

There are millions who wander in darkness to-day,
No Jesus, no Bible, no knowledge to pray;
God help us to feel and to act in His sight,
To render our thanks, now, by giving them light.

MORNING PRAYER FOR MONDAY.

Cause me to hear Thy loving-kindness in the morning; for in Thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto Thee. O holy, good, and alone-wise God, Thou hast created the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth. Thou hast ordained the change from night to day, from light to darkness, from labor to rest, so that men and beasts may be refreshed. I praise and glorify Thee in this morning hour for Thy wisdom and Thy fatherly faithfulness. Thou hast graciously heard my prayer, and hast preserved me during the past night from sickness and other ills. Thou hast thrown Thy protection around all that is mine. Lord, great are Thy works which Thou showest to men; Thy mercy is in the heavens, and Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. I slept, and Thou didst wake. Sleeping I was as

one who is dead, but Thou hast caused me again to see the light of the sun.

O my God, be Thou also to-day my Helper and Savior, my Succorer and Comforter, my Refuge, and the God who has mercy on me. Cause Thine eyes to be open over me, that with Thy safe conduct I may go in and out unharmed in my calling, and may again, if it be Thy will, reach the evening unharmed. O my God, grant that Thy blessing may attend me everywhere. In all that I begin in Thy name grant me counsel and success, and let me never will except what Thou dost will. With the risen sun let the light of Thy holy Spirit arise in me, that I may spend the day in Thy fear and love, and in obedience towards Thee. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Let Him lead, teach, and guide me, in order that I may not knowingly sin against Thee this day. And when I am tempted to sin, let Him remind me, and thus by His inward warning keep me from committing sin.

I put on my clothes; Lord Jesus, clothe me with the garment of Thy righteousness. I wash my hands; Lord Jesus, wash me with Thy holy blood from all my sins. Guard me, that I may never walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor sit in the seat of the scornful. For to be their friend means to be Thy enemy. If I would have the friendship of the world, and would engage with worldlings in their sinful and unholy ways, Thou wouldest become my enemy. O my God, impress upon my heart the words: Walk thou before Me and be thou perfect. Oh, how many begin a new week, but do not live to

the end of it! When the week is ended, they are sick, or even in their graves! Therefore grant that I may always follow after holiness, without which no one shall see Thee. Make me zealous to be godly in my speech, blameless in my walk, and holy in my thoughts, that I may always be found, O Jesus, in a state of grace and in Thy wounds. May the grace of the Father keep me, the love of the Son sanctify me, and the communion of the Holy Ghost make me fruitful unto all good works.

Smile on my minutes as they roll, And guide my future days;
And let Thy goodness fill my soul With gratitude and praise. Amen.

The Believing Christian Prays for God's Blessing at the Beginning of the Week.

EXHORTATION.

Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him. *Col. 3, 17.*

We have reason to pray and beseech God at the beginning of each day; how much more should a believing Christian lift up his head and his eyes to God when he is about to begin a new week! How many men were hale and strong on Sunday, the first day of the week, but were buried the Saturday following! How many have begun the week happy and prosperous, but before the week was ended, misfortune had overwhelmed them like a tempest, and they closed the week in anguish and woe, with much weeping and wringing of hands. Now, my dear Christian, the same may happen to you and to me; hence, we should turn to God at the very beginning of the week.

A believing Christian, however, should (1) call upon God for His Holy Spirit to sanctify his heart and to govern him, lest he fall into sins, offend God, do violence to his conscience, grieve his neighbor, and burden his soul with a heavy responsibility. (2) During the week he should not forget to pray and to worship God, but should be diligent in attending divine service and prayer-

meetings not only on Sunday, but also during the week. Moreover, he should daily read and ponder God's Word at home with his family. (3) Since success does not depend on our hastening and hurrying to work, he should especially call upon God for His blessing; and also have his thoughts upon God while at work. He should begin, pursue, and end his work with prayer. (4) He should be careful of what he says, should lead a Christian life, should have God before his eyes, and remember that one week after another passes until finally the last week arrives, when he must die and his soul must appear before God to render its account. He who does this can begin the week with God's blessing and end it with God's protection. Even if God should permit that week to become a week of many crosses to the Christian, nevertheless God will during that week be and remain his Helper, Savior, and Defender.

PRAYER.

O loving and merciful God, with Thy aid I begin this new week. I do not know what will happen to me in the course of this week. Much evil and misfortune may befall us in a single day. How much more in a whole week! Hence, I come to Thee at the very beginning of the week and commend myself wholly to Thee. O my God, grant me Thy Holy Spirit that He may sanctify, lead, and govern me, and bear witness with my spirit that I am a child of God. Bless me this week; bless my going out and my coming in; bless the labor of my calling and my occupation; bless every step I take. I lift up mine eyes to the hills from whence cometh my help and blessing. My help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. If Thou ledest me, I shall not stray; if Thou keepest me, I shall not fall. Therefore let Thy faithfulness and mercy guard me in all my ways. Bless all that I have, and let Thy blessing prosper me.

O my God and faithful Father, protect and keep

me from all harm, danger, and misfortune. Let me remain under Thy gracious protection day and night. Guard my house on every side like the house of Job. Let Thy angels encamp round about me and my possessions, and I shall not be greatly moved. Hear my prayer when I cry unto Thee, and let me not go unheard from Thy throne of grace. Keep me from grievous sins. Show me Thy ways, O Lord; lead me in Thy truth. Unite my heart to fear Thy name. Grant that I may become more pious and godly during this week, that I may increase in knowledge and love of Thee, and as I am passing out of one week into another, grant that I may also grow in the inward man, and may add to my faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness. If the last week of my life has now arrived, grant that I may be assured of Thy grace. If this week should become a week of crosses to me, strengthen me by Thy Holy Spirit, that with Thy mighty aid I may be able to endure and to overcome all. Be Thou my Helper in every need, and save me out of every trouble. I commend myself, body and soul, and all that I have, together with all pious Christians, to Thy gracious and fatherly protection.

Direct, control, suggest this day All I design, or do, or say,
That all my powers, with all their might, In Thy sole glory
may unite.

HYMN.

Forth in Thy name, O Lord, I go,
My daily labor to pursue,
Thee, only Thee, resolved to know
In all I think, or speak, or do.

The task Thy wisdom hath assigned,
O let me cheerfully fulfil;
In all my works Thy presence find,
And prove Thy good and perfect will.

Thee may I set at my right hand,
Whose eyes my inmost substance see,
And labor on at Thy command,
And offer all my works to Thee.

For Thee I ever would employ
Whate'er Thy bounteous grace hath giv'n,
And run my course with even joy,
And closely walk with Thee to heav'n.

Exhortation to Evening Prayer on Monday.

I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety. *Ps. 4, 8.*

Gratitude is a beautiful grace, well pleasing to God and men. Accordingly a believing Christian should always consider when the evening arrives that it is God who has permitted him to live through the day. It is deplorable that many persons spend days, weeks, months, yea, even years, without considering what God has done for them. They enjoy the protection, aid, and help of God and never once thank Him. They regard it as a matter of course that they are well and happy and spend their time in prosperity. They imagine that God owes it to them to preserve them and cause all to be well with them. Hence, O Christian, withdraw from such ungrateful persons. When you have happily passed the day, aided and protected by God; when the sun is about to set, and it is toward evening, lift up your eyes toward heaven in thanksgiving and prayer.

(1) Give thanks to God because He has kept you from misfortune during the day. Consider that while no harm has touched you, probably many persons have suffered the greatest misfortunes, have lost their health, find themselves sick abed and in great pain in the evening, although they were still hale and well in the morning. Yea, how many have been reduced to poverty during

the day by some misfortune, of which they had no inkling in the morning.

(2) Pray God for the forgiveness of thy sins. Cast over in your mind what you have said or done. If you have spoken aught against God or your neighbor during the day; if you have done anything that is against your conscience and the Christian faith, do not retire, do not go to sleep, before you have asked God to forgive you.

(3) Consider that God may require your soul of you this very night. Make your peace with God before you close your eyes.

(4) Pray to God for His protection and the guardian care of His holy angels, that they may ward off all evil from you.

(5) Think of God even during the night, if you happen to awake. Give thanks to Him, and you shall sleep calmly and peacefully in His arms and under the protection of His holy angels.

EVENING PRAYER FOR MONDAY.

I will lay me down in peace and sleep; for Thou, Lord, makest me dwell in safety. O Thou eternal and almighty God, these are my evening thoughts now that I am about to seek my rest. How shall I sufficiently thank Thee because Thou hast guided my going out and my coming in so that I have not dashed my foot against a stone? Thou hast given me food and drink; Thou hast comforted and refreshed me; Thy visitation has preserved my spirit; and through Thee and Thy grace I still live this day. All these and other mercies are voices which summon me to praise Thee. Therefore, bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits!

Forgive me, O Lord, in mercy forgive me, if I have not kept the example of my Lord Jesus before my eyes, but have put Thy commandments out of my mind and have lived with the world and ac-

cording to its ways. Alas, Lord, I accuse myself and repent in dust and ashes. The day is now spent: cause my sins to vanish like mist, and remember them no more forever. In true sincerity of my heart I herewith promise that I will diligently serve Thee and regulate my walk by Thy Word.

Protect me this night against all the wiles of the enemy, against misfortune and all evil. When I fall asleep, dear Lord Jesus, do Thou close my eyes, and at the same time impress upon my heart Thy bleeding image, that I may never forget Thee. Grant that my yearning soul may ever dream of Thee, O God; that I may ever remain firmly united to Thee, and that also in my sleep I may be Thine. Be my Light in darkness, my Help in trouble. When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. I know of no helper save Thee, O almighty God. My Father is with me; why, then, should I fear, though I lie alone and sleep? My Jesus, the Light of my soul, is with me, though my bodily eyes are closed. The Holy Ghost is with me and maintains His witness in my heart, that I am a child of God, though I lie insensible. Since I am enfolded in the protection of the Triune God, I sleep in safety like Jacob; I sleep unconcerned as a child on his mother's breast; I sleep protected like Peter.

O Lord, I pray remember me Throughout the shades of night,
And grant to me most graciously The shield of Thy great might.
And therefore now I close my eyes And sleep with tranquil breast;
Why waste the time in fears or sighs? God watches o'er my rest.
Amen.

MORNING PRAYER ON TUESDAY.

Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light! O Thou merciful God, whose goodness and faithfulness is renewed every morning, I give Thee thanks and praise with heart and voice because Thou hast again permitted me this morning to rise from my bed in health, and hast preserved my body from harm and my soul from sin. How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings and are sheltered there by Thy might. The darkness is past, and I behold again the light of the sun. Grant me grace to walk in Thy light this entire day, and to flee all the works of darkness. I count that day lost on which I have served the world, and have ordered my speech, my action, and my thoughts to suit the habits and the follies of the world. Of all these things I shall one day have to render a strict account before Thy judgment-seat.

I prefer to consecrate myself wholly to Thy service with body and soul. Grant that I may wish nothing, propose and think of nothing but what pleases Thee, that this entire day may be hallowed to Thee. Yea, grant that I may always live, speak, and act as though I must die this day. Now that this dark night is past, and I have reposed in Thy arms as Thy child and am granted a new lease of life, I know not whither to betake me except to Thee. I knock at the door of Thy grace; I turn again to the Fountain whence I draw blessing after blessing and help after help. For what Thou, Lord, dost bless is blessed forever. When Thou openest Thy hand, Thou satisfiest the desire of every living thing.

Give me good counsel when I need counsel. Direct my plans and purposes according to Thy will. Kindle in me the flame of Thy divine love, that I may this day show my faith by my works, abide in sincere love towards Thee and my neighbor, and reach the evening unharmed in my conscience. Unto Thee, Lord, my God, do I cry; be not silent to me: lest if Thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit. Hear the voice of my supplication as I lift up my hands towards Thy sanctuary. Let the prayer of the afflicted, the downcast, the sick, and also the prayer of my family and of all God-fearing men find a hearing at Thy throne of grace.

Order our path in all things According to Thy mind, And when this life is over, And all must be resigned, O grant us then to die With calm and fearless spirit, And after death inherit Eternal life on high. Amen.

The Believing Christian Rejoices in His Regeneration.

EXHORTATION.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. *1 Pet. 1, 3. 4.*

If any man glory, let him glory in the Lord. If any rejoice, let him rejoice at such things as can make him eternally happy. Now, if there is anything in which a believer may glory and at which he may rejoice, it is certainly his regeneration, the blessed fact that he was baptized and thereby was made a child of God.

In Holy Baptism we have obtained (1) sonship with God. God is our Father, and we being His children, He will sustain, preserve, provide for us, and will never forsake us. We have received (2) the righteousness of Jesus Christ. All that Christ

has acquired by His suffering and death has been given us and made our own in Holy Baptism. Yea, we have been planted in Him. He is the Vine, we are the branches, through Him we obtain new strength unto every good work, light, wisdom, and grace. (3) There has been imparted to us the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who will make His abode in us, sanctify our hearts, govern our tongues and our lips, and order our whole life according to the Word and will of God. By this indwelling power of the Holy Spirit we are more and more drawn away from evil, and are made to grow in faith, in godliness, and in the fear of God, as a new-born babe increases in years and in strength. (4) We also obtain everlasting salvation, that is, when this life is ended, we shall share eternal joy and glory.

A person pondering these things must needs rejoice in God with all his heart. However, let him be on his guard, (1) lest he lose the grace bestowed upon him; (2) that he may walk worthy of his vocation; (3) lest he again begin to love the world or sin wantonly with the unregenerate and worldly people and conform to their ways; (4) that as a loving child he may obey his heavenly Father, follow the Lord Jesus, and not resist the prompting of the Holy Spirit. If he does this, he will surely enjoy the love, grace, and assistance of the Triune God here in time, and will obtain everlasting life hereafter.

PRAYER.

O mighty God and dearest Father, how can I sufficiently know, praise, and magnify Thy love! Thou hast been so deeply concerned for my soul, lest it should perish. Oh, what glory hast Thou imparted to me in Holy Baptism by adopting me as Thy child! Men greatly boast the happiness which they derive from their noble birth, from the fact that they have risen to exalted positions of honor, from their great wealth and their pretentious possessions. Behold, I esteem the happiness which I enjoy in being Thy child much more highly. For, if we are children, we are also heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer

with Him, that we may be also glorified together. Since I am a child of God, my heavenly Father will keep, govern, protect, and provide for me; yea, He will never in any trouble forsake me. Since I am a child of God, I have in Him not only a powerful support in life, but also great comfort in death; for, since I am His child, He will refresh, restore, and comfort me, and when I quit this world, He will conduct me to the life of joy without end.

O dearest Father, grant me Thy Holy Spirit, that He may continually remind me of this glory. I am still in this world and dwell among the children of men. Keep me from sinning and doing evil with the children of the world, and from conforming to their ways. If I see any one doing evil, if I hear evil spoken, put me in mind that I am a child of God, and that such sins and vices are not becoming to me. Grant me the strength to say cheerfully: Worldlings, know that my birthright and heavenly heritage with God shall not be bartered for your pleasures, vanities, and customs! O my Jesus, Thou knowest that I love Thee, and that I am sincerely grieved when I do not at all times and in very deed love Thee as I should and desire to do. Oh, be pleased to accept at least my good intention; grant that I may lead a life of faith and godliness, of holiness, purity, and childlike humility. Let me love, honor, fear, and follow Thee, that I may live and die as Thy child, and as Thy child may attain to heavenly joys.

In Holy Baptism long ago I joined me to the living Vine; Thou lovest me in Him, I know, In Him Thou dost accept me Thine. My God, for Jesus' sake I pray Thy peace may bless my dying day. Amen.

HYMN.

Baptized into Thy name most holy,
O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
I claim a place, though weak and lowly,
Among Thy seed, Thy chosen host;
Buried with Christ and dead to sin,
Thy spirit now shall live within.

My loving Father, Thou dost take me
To be henceforth Thy child and heir;
My faithful Savior, Thou dost make me
The fruit of all Thy sorrows share;
Thou, Holy Ghost, wilt comfort me
When darkest clouds around I see.

And I have vowed to fear and love Thee,
And to obey Thee, Lord, alone;
I felt Thy Holy Spirit move me,
And freely pledged myself Thine own,
Renouncing sin to keep the faith,
And war with evil unto death.

My faithful God, Thou failest never,
Thy covenant surely will abide;
O cast me not away forever,
Should I transgress it on my side;
If I have sore my soul defiled,
Yet still forgive, restore Thy child.

Yea, all I am and love most dearly,
To Thee I offer new and whole;
O let me make my vows sincerely,
Take full possession of my soul,
Let naught within me, naught I own,
Serve any will but Thine alone.

Depart, depart, thou prince of darkness!
No more by thee I'll be enticed.
Mine is indeed a tarnished conscience,
But sprinkled with the blood of Christ.
Away, vain world! O sin, away!
Lo! I renounce you all this day.

And never let my purpose falter,
O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;
But keep me faithful to Thine altar,
Till Thou shalt call me from my post;
So unto Thee I live and die,
And praise Thee evermore on high.

EVENING PRAYER ON TUESDAY.

The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? Thus, O gracious and loving God, I may speak in this evening hour. I give Thee humble thanks because Thou hast suffered me to complete this day under Thy fatherly protection, Thy loving care, Thy gracious guidance, and Thy abundant blessing. Lord, Thy goodness is great, and Thy mercy is without end. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him; He also will hear their cry, and will save them.

Alas, my God, how swiftly the day has passed! As an arrow shot from the bow, so swiftly our years fly. Therefore make me to know mine end and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am. Behold, Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth, and mine age is as nothing before Thee. We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Therefore I enter into judgment with myself and inquire, My soul, how hast thou spent this day? Hast thou thought upon anything good? Has God remained united with thee, or hast thou driven Him from thee by

deliberate and conscious sins? My mouth, what hast thou spoken to-day? Hast thou spoken what is honest, chaste, and of good report? Hast thou spread abroad the praise of God? Or hast thou overflowed with filthiness and foolish talking? Whither have ye gone, my feet? What acts have ye performed and committed, my hands? To what have ye listened, my ears? At what have ye looked, my eyes? What has been thy desire, study, and aim to-day, my heart?

O my God, if I am to answer all these questions, how shall I stand? O Lord, with the passing of this day remove my transgressions. O Jesus, blot out my sins with Thy holy blood. O Holy Spirit, assure me of the forgiveness of all my sins before I fall asleep. When I am thus acquitted of my guilt, O Triune God, I shall calmly go to sleep, and to-morrow I shall be the more diligent to avoid all that may grieve Thee. My Father, let Thy love cover me and mine. My Jesus, in Thy wounds I rest in peace and safety. O Holy Spirit, before I fall asleep, do Thou breathe in my heart the last sigh with which I commend my spirit into the hands of God.

Though I have from Thee departed, Now I seek Thy face again, For Thy Son, the Loving-hearted, Made our peace through bitter pain. Yes, far greater than our sin, Though it still be strong within, Is Thy love that fails us never, Mercy that endures forever. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER ON WEDNESDAY.

When I awake, I am still with Thee, O gracious and loving God, my Rock, my Fortress, and my Deliverer, my Shield, and the Horn of my Salvation, and my Strong Tower! I lift up my voice at this

early hour to the throne of Thy grace, and give Thee thanks, because during the past night Thou hast spread Thy wings above me, and hast preserved my body and my soul from all harm. Blessed be the Lord every day, and blessed be His holy name forever and ever. My God, Thou continuest my life from day to day, in order that I may prepare myself for eternity and yield my soul unto Thee as Thy possession and dwelling. Thou hast created me for a life without end. Thou art not willing that I should perish, but that I should repent and live. O grant that I may employ this day in working out my own salvation with fear and trembling. It is now mid-week. Three days have passed without ill fortune to me. If it please Thee, let me also spend the remaining three under Thy protection and grace. When I walk in the midst of trouble, do Thou refresh me. When my enemies gather around me, do Thou come to my rescue and help me. O Jesus, my Mediator, make my heart Thy dwelling-place, that I may hasten to Thee in every event, trouble, distress, and in the hour of death, and obtain help from Thee. If God be for me, who can be against me? O dearest Savior, let me tread in Thy holy footsteps to-day; let me walk as Thou didst walk. Then shall I readily escape the temptations of the world, and the wiles of my own heart.

Be at my side while I pursue my calling. I say with full assurance, "Lord, I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." Bless me whether I sleep or wake; bless every step; bless me in all things; let Thy blessing rest upon me. Let me be blessed of Thee, and do not take Thy blessing away from me. Amidst the works of my calling let my heart dili-

gently turn to Thee. When my heart inclines to become entangled, and to seek enjoyment in the lust of the world and in the sins of the world, give me strength to wrest it from these things and to sink it into Thy love, O my Father, into Thy wounds, O my Jesus, that it may not stray from Thy fellowship, but may still be found there when the evening has arrived. If a conflict awaits me to-day, help me to overcome it. If a sinful thought suggests itself in my heart, or a naughty word rises to my lips, strengthen me that I may suppress it by Thy Spirit. Let my household be commended to Thee, and all who are afflicted and sick; cause the light of Thy grace to arise and shine in the midst of their suffering.

Let my life and conversation Be directed by Thy Word; Lord,
Thy constant preservation To Thy erring child afford. Nowhere
but alone in Thee From all harm can I be free. Amen.

The Believing Christian Prays God to Wean Him from the World.

EXHORTATION.

Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. *Rom. 12, 2.*

When a believing Christian reflects that the love of the world, like a weed, grows spontaneously in the soul, while the fear of God and the love of God, like a beautiful and fragrant plant, must be planted in the heart and diligently and constantly tended, he will understand with what concern and anxiety he is expected to guard his heart. Accordingly, he should (1) be aware that the world is both within and without him. Within him there is the world in the form of evil lusts, wiles, desires, and thoughts of his heart. Without him there is the world in the form of the examples, enticements, and temptations of evil men. (2) All these evils a

true Christian must resist: the lusts and the thoughts arising in him, by prayer and supplication; the allurements of the world, by avoiding its society, habits, customs, and mode of living. (3) Now, since it is not in his own power to do this, he must fervently pray God for help and assistance.

(4) This separation of the world must not be effected by locking oneself up, shutting oneself in, and refusing to speak to, or associate with, any one; it must consist in refusing to join the children of the world in their sins and to imitate their wicked works and deeds. For if we were to have absolutely nothing to do with worldly men, we should, as Paul declares, have to go out of the world entirely. We are to be in the world, as Joseph in Egypt, Lot in Sodom, Daniel and his companions in Babylon. All these men did not practise the wicked ways of the people and the cities where they lived. (5) This separation from the world is not to be effected merely for show and for a few days, when we are about to go to confession and to the Lord's Supper, but we are to be constantly engaged in this work. The world must be turned out of our hearts every day, and every day Jesus must enter our hearts.

PRAYER.

Merciful God, Thou Lover of men, how great is Thy loving-kindness toward us! Thou dost patiently bear our many faults and weaknesses. Thou dost not punish us in the very acts, nor according to our deserts. Thou hast opened my eyes by Thy Word, so that I now know myself and, alas! recognize the depravity of my heart. I feel that the world is within me and without me. I find the world within me, namely, evil desires of my heart, sinful inclinations and promptings to evil. I find the world without me, namely, evil men who would entice and mislead me by their sinful examples and temptations. Alas! my heart, which is froward by nature, takes greater delight and pleasure in these things than in Thy holy Word. Woe is me that I have such a long time, so frequently, and to such a degree

allowed myself to be enticed and drawn away by the world! I am ashamed to lift up my eyes to Thy presence when I think of the follies of my youthful years. Alas! I have served the world better than Thee, O my God! I have tried more to please the world than Thee; I have clung to the world more than to Thee. With all these things I have offended Thee, have wounded my conscience, and aroused Thy anger.

Behold, my God, I return, and repent in dust and ashes. O my God, withdraw me from the world, that Thou alone mayest possess and govern my heart. Let Thy Holy Spirit sanctify me wholly, and drive the world out of me. Make me consider the miserable end of the children of the world, that I may cleave to Thee and not to the world; that I may follow Thee and not the world; that I may obey Thee and not the world. Draw me back when I am about to run and sin with the world again. Keep me always in Thy fear, and put me in mind that Thou hast created me for Thy service, that I should daily put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Cause the world to become more and more distasteful to me; let me with ever-growing relish strive after holiness, the fear of God, and heaven. Grant that I may constantly despise the lust of the world, which passes away; that I may flee the lust and the joys of the world, because after one has drained them, there follows nothing but anxiety, unrest, an evil conscience, and the destruction of the soul. Pluck from my heart whatever there is still remaining in it of the world and of the love of the world, and plant Thy holy fear within me, in order that I may carefully avoid, from love of Thee, all that is evil.

Come, O come, Thou quickening Spirit, True God from eternity! Let us Thy blest grace inherit, And our souls be filled with Thee; Then shall spirit, life, and light Dissipate our inner night. Grant our hearts Thy heavenly treasure: Wisdom, counsel, purity, That in naught we may take pleasure But in that which pleaseth Thee. Let Thy knowledge spread and grow, Working error's overthrow. Amen.

HYMN.

What is the world to me,
And all its vaunted pleasure,
When Thou, and Thou alone,
Lord Jesus, art my Treasure!
Thou only, dearest Lord,
My soul's Delight shall be,
Thou art my Peace, my Rest —
What is the world to me!

The world is like the smoke,
A fleeting exhalation;
A shadow faint and dim
Of very short duration;
My Jesus doth abide,
Though all things fade and flee;
My everlasting Rock —
What is the world to me!

The world strives to be praised
And honored by the mighty,
Nor will at all reflect
How frail they are and flighty.
But what I glory in
Above all things is He,
My Jesus, He alone —
What is the world to me!

The world seeks after wealth,
And unto Mammon offers
Its all, content if gold
Is hoarded in its coffers;
I know a higher good,
Which e'er my joy shall be;
My Jesus is my wealth —
What is the world to me!

The world is sorely grieved
If ever it is slighted,
As though an enemy
Its honor would have blighted.
Christ, I bear Thy reproach
While thus it pleaseth Thee.
I'm honored by my Lord —
What is the world to me!

The world cannot extol
Too highly sinful pleasures,
And foolishly resigns
For them the heavenly treasures.
Let others love the world
To please their vanity;
I love the Lord, my God —
What is the world to me!

What is the world to me!
It rapidly must vanish,
With all its gorgeous pomp
Pale death it cannot banish;
Its riches pass away,
And all its joys must flee,
But Jesus doth abide —
What is the world to me!

What is the world to me!
My Jesus is my Treasure,
My Life, my Wealth, my All,
My Friend, my Love, my Pleasure,
My heavenly happiness
And bliss eternally.
Once more, then, I would say,
What is the world to me!

EVENING PRAYER FOR WEDNESDAY.

I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the
Lord sustained me. O holy, gracious, and alone
wise God! This day is declining, and Thou hast

again made me to experience that Thou art the true Father, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. According to Thine infinite goodness Thou hast cared for me, so that I have not lacked any good thing. O Lord, I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast shown me. What shall I render unto the Lord for all the benefits which He bestows upon me daily, though I am but dust and ashes? Despise not the humble offering of praise which I bring Thee in this evening hour, and continue to look upon me with Thy favor.

Forgive me, O gracious God, whatever sins I have committed against Thee this day in thought, word, and deed. Help me to lay aside, with my garments, every evil habit, impropriety, and sin. Grant that to-morrow and for the rest of my life I may hate and quit them. Help me to put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, and never to put him on again. During the coming night let me, together with all my relatives and the members of my household, sleep in peace and safety under Thy protecting grace.

The sun has vanished; but do Thou, O Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, shine with Thy luster within my heart. Fill me while I sleep with good impulses, so that, when I awake, Thy name and the thought of Thee may be in my heart. Grant that in sleepless nights I may meditate on my couch and speak of Thy goodness, faithfulness, and gracious guidance, and may thus drive away all useless cares and sinful thoughts. Renew my strength by sleep, that I may arise in the morning refreshed and cheerful. As the shepherd watches over his flock, even so

let me be commended in body and soul to Thy Shepherd's care.

But if for the trial of my faith, my patience, and hope, Thou shouldst send affliction upon me by day or night, remember, O my God, that I am Thy child; that without Thee I can do nothing; and that it is for Thee, my Father, to send me deliverance and help from Thy sanctuary. Cause me to rejoice in sorrow, comfort me in affliction; when I am forsaken, do Thou cordially receive me. Let Thy omnipresence and Thy all-seeing eye keep me by day and by night from sin. I lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help; my help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

The day is past and over. All thanks, O Lord, to Thee! I pray Thee now that sinless The hours of dark may be. O Jesus, keep me in Thy sight, And save me through the coming night. The joys of day are over; I lift my heart to Thee, And pray Thee that offenseless The hours of dark may be. O Jesus, make their darkness light And save me through the coming night! The toils of day are over. I raise my hymn to Thee, And ask that free from peril The hours of dark may be. O Jesus, keep me in Thy sight, And guard me through the coming night. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER FOR THURSDAY.

Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation. Harken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God; for unto Thee will I pray. O Thou gracious and merciful God! I praise and magnify Thee in this morning hour, not only because like a father Thou hast sustained and preserved me from my youth, but also because Thou hast been my protection and my aid during the past night, and hast suffered me again to rise in health

for Thy praise and to behold the welcome light of day.

O Thou Lover of life! What is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him? I lay in sleep, utterly self-forgetful; but Thy visitation has preserved my spirit. Thou didst surround me and my house with Thine angel guard, so that no harm could touch me and no misfortune hurt me. Thou hast refreshed me with sweet rest, which many who are sick, sorrowing, or troubled have perhaps had to do without. And Thou hast done this for me, although I had deserved chastisement as much as they, yea, more, because for the innumerable benefits which I have received during all my life I have not been as grateful to Thee, my Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, as my duty required; for I have not, as I should have done, offered to Thee unceasing praise and humble thanks.

By Thy grace I will begin to-day to make amends for what I have neglected through my own fault. I promise in this morning hour that I will serve Thee with body and soul, and will yield myself wholly to Thee. I am resolved that my mouth shall not offend to-day and load me with a heavy responsibility because of foolish talking and sinful idle speech. I will check my feet from walking in any sinful path. Mine eye shall not look at forbidden things and persons. I will not put forth my hands to unrighteousness. I will turn away my ears from pernicious doctrine and evil communications which corrupt good manners. On the contrary, I will devote myself, O Triune God, to Thy service. Oh, do Thou dwell in me, sanctify, guide, and cleanse me more and more by Thy grace.

Let me associate to-day only with godly persons; and if through my calling I should unexpectedly be brought into the company of wicked men, preserve my heart and conscience against their sinful words and polluting deeds. Bless my labors, so that I may perform them with joy and cheerfulness, in child-like reliance upon Thy providing care, and let me experience Thy blessing at every point. And now, I lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help; my help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth, and who shall bless, prosper, and preserve me, here in time and throughout an eternity of joy.

Let our going out be blessed. Bless our entrance in like measure; Bless, O Lord, our toil and rest. Bless our bread, our grief and pleasure, Be in death Thy blessing given, And make us blest heirs of heaven. Amen.

The Believing Christian Desires to Follow Jesus.

EXHORTATION.

If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. *Matt. 16, 24.*

"Lord, see if there be any wicked way in me," — thus a believing Christian should daily pray according to Ps. 139, 24. If a careful traveler must diligently inquire his way, a believer should diligently ascertain the way to heaven. Many deceivers are gone out into the world, says St. John; hence a true Christian must take great care not to be deceived.

Accordingly, a true Christian (1) does not follow the children of the world who seek to take him with them to their merry, but sinful gatherings; for by so doing he would place his soul in very great danger. Still less does he follow the impulse of his evil heart, but every time a thought is suggested to him he inquires, Is it right? Nor does he follow Satan and his enticements, but (2) he follows the Holy Scriptures which tell him what he

is to believe, what he is to do and not to do. Scripture is his rule of life. What the Scriptures do not allow, that he detests with all his heart. In particular, (3) he follows the Lord Jesus, who has given us an example that we should follow in his footsteps. The footsteps of Jesus are humility, chastity, kindness, and godliness. These virtues our Lord practised in His life on earth for our imitation. To follow Him truly in a holy life means to practise these virtues. (4) He also follows the example of other good Christians. Whenever he observes that his fellow-Christians are fervent in prayer, reverent towards God, charitable to the poor, or eager in other virtues, he strives to imitate them. (5) He is to continue thus to follow after holiness until death. Then shall be fulfilled to such souls the words of St. John in Revelation 14, 4: "They follow the Lamb" into life everlasting.

PRAYER.

O my God and Lord, my only desire is so to live that after death I may enter into the joy of heaven! I always rejoice when I read in Thy Word that the elect in heaven follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. But I also know full well that he who would follow the Lamb into glory must follow Him here in time, while he is still living on earth. When I ponder this fact, I am really concerned for my salvation. I see before me many who would become my guides, and I know not which one of them to follow. Satan invites me by his allurements to follow him; the world places before my eyes its examples, its ways, its society. But I fear that I would also have to follow them after death, to hell and damnation.

Therefore, O Jesus, I will follow Thee. Then I shall pursue the safest, best, and most blessed way. I will follow Thee in faith, love, humility, obedience, godliness, and chastity. Christ has left us an example that we should follow His footsteps. His example shall ever be before my eyes. After the example of Jesus, I will love and honor my heavenly

Father and will do His holy will. After His example I will love my fellow-man and will do good to him. After His example I will readily forgive my enemies. After His example I will be humble; for He says: "Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." This is, indeed, my sacred purpose; O give me the strength to accomplish it.

Oh, remind me of these things at all times, in order that, whenever I see before me the behavior, the words, and vanities of the wicked children of this world, I may ask, Whither art thou going, O world? Thy way is not directed to Jesus and His salvation. Help me always to inquire of myself, Is this the true way to heaven? Grant that I may diligently bear in mind who I am and what I ought to be. I ought to be a child of God, a follower of Jesus. I ought to keep myself unspotted from the world. Help me constantly to persevere in this mind and to follow Thee unto death.

Savior, I follow on, Guided by Thee, Seeing not yet the hand That leadeth me; Hushed be my heart and still, Fear I no further ill, Only to meet Thy will My will shall be. Amen.

HYMN.

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus only
Can my heart-felt longing still;
Without Him my soul is lonely,
And I wish what Jesus will.
For my heart, which He hath filled,
Ever cries, Lord, as Thou wilt.

One it is for whom I'm living,
Whom I'm loving faithfully;
Jesus, unto whom I'm giving
What in love He gave to me.
Jesus' blood hides all my guilt;
Lord, O lead me as Thou wilt.

Seems a thing to me a treasure
Which displeasing is to Thee,
Then remove such dangerous pleasure;
Give instead what profits me.
Let my heart by Thee be stilled,
Make me Thine, Lord, as Thou wilt.

Grant that always I endeavor
Thy good pleasure to fulfil,
In me, through me, with me ever,
Lord, accomplish Thou Thy will.
Let me die, Lord, on Thee built,
When, and where, and as Thou wilt.

Lord, Thy praise shall be unceasing,
For Thou gav'st Thyself to me,
And besides so many a blessing,
That I sing now joyfully:
Be it unto me, my Shield,
As Thou wilt, Lord, as Thou wilt.

EVENING PRAYER FOR THURSDAY.

When I lie down in bed, I remember Thee, and when I awake, I speak of Thee. O Thou bounteous and merciful God and Father, again I come before Thy countenance in this evening hour with a thankful heart because Thy grace has showered numerous blessings upon me. Oh, how graciously hast Thou regarded me and hast pitied me like as a father pitieth his child! And thus I have reached this evening unharmed. Thy long-suffering has spared me; for Thou hast not punished me as I had deserved. Oh, pardon all my transgressions with which I have offended Thee secretly or openly! I ought to become stronger in fighting against sin, more zealous unto good works, more devout in prayer, more careful in speech, more godly in conduct. But who can understand his errors? Cleanse Thou me also from secret

faults. Let me henceforth avoid diligently all those things with which I have offended Thee to-day. If my sins are great, Thy mercy is far greater; if Thou wert not a merciful God, O Lord, who could live?

I now lay me down to rest. Do Thou, O God, shut the door after me, as Thou didst at Noah's Ark, that no flood of tribulation may overwhelm me. Let Thy holy angels take me into their protection, that my enemies, visible or invisible, may not disturb my rest. Help me also to remember when lying down in bed, that I shall thus be covered with earth one day, but shall rise again on the last day. Let me spend and conclude all my days in such a manner that I may be able to take comfort in the fact that I have a gracious God and a good conscience, so that I may be ready at whatever hour Thou comest to take me home.

As I lie sleeping and yet continue breathing, so do Thou, O Jesus, remain united with me even in sleep. O Triune God, under Thy shield and protection neither adversity nor death can harm me. Thy love and protection, O Father, Thy wounds, O Jesus, Thy succor, O precious Holy Spirit, are a wall of defense around me within which I sleep in peace and repose well secured. Before this defense Satan must flee and haste away. Let also my dear ones, and all who are poor and in distress, enjoy Thy protection. Let me gather strength in sleep and, if it be Thy will, let me behold the light of day again on the morrow.

Lie still in darkness, Sleep safe in night, The Lord is a Watchman, The Lamb is a Light. Jehovah, He holdeth The sea and the land—The earth in the hollow Of His mighty hand. All's well in the darkness, All's well in the light, The Lord is the Watchman, The Lamb is a Light. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER FOR FRIDAY.

My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. O gracious and loving God, my Father, Redeemer, and Sanctifier! I lift up my heart and my hands in this morning hour to the throne of Thy divine majesty, whence so many blessings have been showered upon me all my life and also during the past night. Thou hast, during this night, been my Strength, my Protection, my Deliverer, my Strong Tower, my Helper in need, my Comfort, my Shield, yea, my All. My God and Lord, I acknowledge that I am unworthy of all these blessings. Thou didst think of me in the midst of darkness; and while the dark shadows encompassed me, Thy fatherly care protected my body and soul against harm and danger. Therefore I praise Thee and magnify Thy name. The Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad.

O loving God, be at my side this day; guide and lead me with Thy counsel and afterward receive me into glory. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. Suggest to me all that I shall have to speak, to-day and at all times, that I may not offend Thee with my lips. Teach me what I must do, so as not to do evil. Let Thy Spirit always knock warningly at my heart, whenever my thoughts are about to stray from Thee. O Jesus, when my flesh and blood excite sinful desires in me, let Thy bleeding image stand before my eyes, and let me remember that at the time of Thy bitter suffering it was on a Friday that Thou didst sweat drops of blood for me on the Mount of Olives; that Thou wast cruelly scourged in the judgment-hall, and wast nailed bleeding to

the cross. If an occasion to sin should present itself to-day from without, and my heart should be willing to yield, place Thy bleeding image before me, that through it every desire to sin may be quenched, mortified, and driven from my heart. Thus let this Friday suggest freedom to me; let it be to me a day of deliverance from sin; and remain such all my life, while I die unto sin and walk in the newness of the spirit.

Remember also my bodily needs and bless me. Let me regard all earthly things as perishable possessions, lest I set my heart upon them; and let me seek the things eternal. When I am at work, strengthen me; when I pray, hear me; when I go out, accompany me; when I return home, depart not from me. Surround me and mine with Thy protection like the house of Job; guard me like Jacob; watch over me as over Elijah; in order that with Thy protection I may again reach the evening in safety. Let no sad message come to me, but let me hear joy and gladness.

Wholly to Thy blest protection I commit my heart and mind. Mighty God! to Thy direction Wholly I may be resigned. Lord, my Shield, my Light divine, O accept and own me Thine! Amen.

The Believing Christian Prays for the Holy Spirit.

EXHORTATION.

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. *Ps. 51, 10, 11.*

To pray for the Holy Ghost is the most necessary and blessed petition; for in the present life we have need of a guide, a teacher, a comforter. All this the Holy Ghost is. He guides us into all truth; He teaches us to know Jesus Christ, He explains His

teaching to us; He comforts us in every affliction and tribulation, yea, in the hour of death. For the gift of the Holy Ghost all should pray, old and young, great and small; parents should ask this gift for themselves and their children; for the Holy Ghost is the earnest of our inheritance. Whoever has not the Holy Spirit in his heart here cannot be saved hereafter. Accordingly, those are of all men the most unfortunate who have not the Holy Spirit. They cannot become godly, nor lead godly lives; but they sin and fall because they have not the Holy Spirit to guide and govern them; yea, who can comfort them on their dying bed and cheer them in their last anguish? However, when God has given us His Holy Spirit, we must not drive Him from us by wilful sins and an ungodly life, but we must daily pray: Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me! A soul who prays thus is in true union with God and in a state of grace; for St. Paul testifies: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Romans 8, 14.

PRAYER.

O mighty God and holy Father, behold, I, Thy poor child, come to Thee and pray for a necessary gift, for the Holy Ghost, whom Thou hast graciously promised to give to all who ask Thee. Therefore send Thy Holy Spirit down from above, from Thy holy habitation, into my heart, that He may be my guide, to teach me to walk according to Thy counsel, and to enable me at all times to do what is pleasing to Thee.

Oh, I see before me so many ways of error and ways of sin; I see so many men walking in these ways and urging me partly with kind words and partly with threats to sin and to do evil with them. O God, lead me in Thy truth, keep my heart steadily to this purpose that I may fear Thy name. Whenever the world with its sins becomes attractive to me, put me in mind that the broad way leads to destruction and damnation. Oh, grant me Thy Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, to teach me; the Spirit

of comfort, to revive me; the Spirit of joy, to gladden me in sorrow; the Spirit of regeneration, to make me a new creature and a new man; the Spirit of adoption, to assure me that I am a child of God; the Spirit, who is the earnest of my heavenly inheritance.

O precious Holy Spirit, sanctify me. Thou seest that my heart is still filled with impurity, evil habits, and sins, and that hence nothing but unholy thoughts and words and deeds proceed from it. But Thou seest also that by Thy grace I heartily abhor these things. Oh, I am sorry that I have ever grieved Thee and made light of Thy warning. I herewith yield myself to Thy holy guidance and rule. Thou shalt be the life of my soul, the strength of my life, the comfort of my heart, the light of my understanding, the repose and firmness of my will, the treasure of my memory, the origin, the beginning, and the end of my new spiritual life. Oh, sanctify me wholly, that my spirit, together with my soul and body, may be kept blameless unto the day of Jesus Christ. Make my heart Thy temple and dwell therein; make my members instruments of righteousness that I may not sin purposely and wilfully. Make my heart a living sacrifice acceptable to God. Thou sacred fire, consume and drive from my heart all fleshly lusts and desires, that I may employ also the powers of my body for Thy glory. Govern me, and guide me always in an even path, till Thou shalt bring me to heaven. When my flesh and blood and the world, because of the sufferings of the present time, would rob me of the comfort that I am a child of God, do Thou assure me by Thy powerful consolation that neither life nor death

shall separate me from the love of God, and that the children of God do indeed bear their cross and affliction, but remain children of God nevertheless. Be and remain the constant Tenant and Lord in my heart; bear witness with my spirit that I am a child of God. In the hour of death, when all human help and support fail, comfort me with the consolation that I shall share the glory which my dear Jesus has acquired for me by His suffering and death.

With Thy gifts my heart endowing, Make it new and clean and fair; Let it in true love be glowing, Living in Thy grace fore'er; Give me courage bold and good, Sanctify my flesh and blood, Let me, trusting in Christ's merit, Worship God in truth and spirit. Thus myself I will deliver, Lord, to Thee; my soul shall strive Only after heav'n forever, Until there I shall arrive Where the Father, and the Son, And Thyself in heaven's high throne I shall praise and all Thy treasures In angelic, heavenly measures. Amen.

HYMN.

Come, O come, Thou quick'ning Spirit,
True God from eternity!
Let us Thy blest grace inherit,
And our souls be filled with Thee;
Then shall spirit, life, and light
Dissipate our inner night.

Grant our heart Thy heavenly treasure:
Wisdom, counsel, purity,
That in naught we may take pleasure
But in that which pleaseth Thee.
Let Thy knowledge spread and grow,
Working error's overthrow.

Lead us to our soul's salvation,
Keep us in the paths of grace,
Shield us from the world's temptation
That might foil us in the race;
When we stumble, hear our call,
Work repentance for our fall.

Let us trust Thy witness wholly
That we children are of God,
Who rely upon Him solely,
When they pass beneath the rod;
For the Father's chastenings
Bless above all earthly things.

Prompt us that we come before Him
Joyously with hope in view,
Sigh in us, when we implore Him,
Ever plead for us anew;
Then our prayer shall not be vain,
And our faith new strength shall gain.

If our soul for comfort languish,
And despondency grow strong,
That our heart must cry in anguish:
"O my God, my God, how long!"
Comfort then the aching breast,
Grant us courage, patience, rest.

Mighty Spirit of reliance,
Sure Defense in all our need!
When the Foe bids us defiance,
Bid Thy work in us Godspeed.
Grant us weapons for the strife,
And with victory crown our life.

Guard, O God, our faith forever;
Let not Satan, death, or shame
Ever part us from our Savior;
Lord, our refuge is Thy name.
Though our flesh would fain say Nay,
Be Thy Word to us still Yea.

And when death life's thread is rending,
Then assure us yet the more,
As the heirs of life unending,
Of the glory there in store
Which can never be expressed,
But with which we shall be blest.

EVENING PRAYER FOR FRIDAY.

The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them. O great and mighty God, let Thy holy angels encamp round about me also in this coming night, and surround me with their mighty protection. As Thou didst command Thy angels to guard me during the day and to keep me in all my ways, so let them stand around my bed at night like Solomon's mighty men.

I now lie down to rest, my Jesus. Cover Thou the door-posts of my heart with Thy holy blood that no harm may come nigh me. If Thou art with me, I have no fear. Thou hast been at my side to-day, whithersoever I have gone. Thou hast put Thy blessing upon all my activities. Thou hast prospered all that I have undertaken in Thy name. Oh, that the words of Joseph had been my constant motto to-day: "How, then, can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Forgive unto me in mercy all the evil that I have done, spoken, or conceived this day. With the waning day let also my sins and the punishment of my sins vanish, that they may be remembered no more forever.

If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? For I know full well that it is true that no man can be just in the sight of God. If He will contend with Him, He cannot answer Him one in a thousand. But I will pay with the blood of Jesus what I cannot pay out of my own means. My Jesus is mine, His righteousness is mine, His heaven is mine. Therefore receive me, O my Keeper; my Shepherd, make me Thine! Of every good the fountain, Thou art the spring of mine. Let Thy goodness lead me to repentance;

for Thou hast loved me with an everlasting love, and with loving-kindness hast Thou drawn me. Let the warmth of Thy blood and Thy faithful love warm my cold heart, that I may nevermore intentionally offend Thee, who hast shown me so many kindnesses.

I lay me down to rest. This night may be my last. I know how to lie down to sleep, but I do not know how I shall arise. That rests with Thee alone, who art Lord over the days of my life. But this I know for a surety, that when I fall asleep in Thy name, my Father, in Thy wounds, O Jesus, in Thy fellowship, O precious Holy Spirit, I die a blessed death, even though I should not arise again for this earthly life.

Pilgrims here on earth, and strangers, Dwelling in the midst of foes, Us and ours preserve from dangers: In Thine arms may we repose; And when life's sad day is past, Rest with Thee in heav'n at last. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER FOR SATURDAY.

Lord, make me to know mine end and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am: such are my thoughts, O strong and almighty God, now that I have reached the end of the week; for Thou hast permitted me to rise in health on this last day of the week. I praise Thee in this morning hour because Thou hast so gloriously protected and so mightily defended my body and soul, that no danger nor affliction has been able to disturb me. O my God, as little as the stars in the firmament, the sand on the seashore, the drops in the ocean can be numbered, as little can I recount the blessings which I have received from Thee dur-

ing all my life and also during this week. Thou hast not left me during this night; Thou hast warded off every calamity. Thou saidst: Lie still, my child, confiding, The tempter's wiles deriding; No nightly terror frighten Thy sleep till morning brighten. 'Tis done; the light is shining Upon me, and from pining And fear I am recovered: Thy love about me hovered.

Oh, let me constantly deny this day all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and pass the day in a sober, righteous, and godly manner. With my garments let me also put on cordial pity, kindness, meekness, humility, and patience, while I put off the old man with his works: unrighteousness, insincerity, lying, anger, strife, discord, impurity, and malice. Consecrate my heart to be Thy temple, that nothing may be said or done by me to-day that is displeasing to Thee.

My Jesus, who art Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, by Thy grace I have again reached the end of a week. Let me bear in mind that the last week and the last day of my life will come some time, and let me so begin, continue, and end each week and each day that in the last hours of my life I may not have to be ashamed, or to bewail that I ever lived. Let me also spend this day in Thy holy fear; preserve my going out and my coming in; bless my labor; assist me in every difficulty and direct all my undertakings and plans according to Thy will. Destroy the record of my sins which I have accumulated during this week and cancel them with Thy blood. Let me become more godly, sincere, and God-pleasing during this week. I rejoice even now at the thought of the

approaching Sunday, when I shall rest from the works of my earthly calling, in order that Thou mayest do Thy work in me for my edification and sanctification.

O Holy Spirit, enter in, And in our hearts Thy work begin,
Thy temple deign to make us; Sun of the soul, Thou Light divine,
Around and in us brightly shine, To joy and gladness wake us,
That we To Thee Truly living, To Thee giving Prayer unceasing,
Still may be in love increasing. Amen.

The Believing Christian Returns Thanks to God at the End of the Week.

EXHORTATION.

What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me? *Ps. 116, 12.*

Day after day and week after week of our life passes away. and with each day and week we approach nearer to our dying hour. Meanwhile our good God is so merciful that He has hitherto shown us many benefits in body and soul, and has filled our hearts with food and gladness. With thoughts such as these a believing Christian is occupied at the end of the week.

(1) He thanks God for the blessings which he has received, for the protection which has enabled him to spend the week in safety, for the help which he has obtained and for which he has besought God in prayer. If he is informed that during the week others have suffered misfortune, have met with sorrow, have fallen from grace, have incurred loss, and have not been relieved from their misery and grief, he feels pity for them, and magnifies the goodness of God which has spared him such afflictions. (2) A believing Christian revolves in his mind that by such constant manifestations of His goodness God desires to lead him to repentance. Therefore, on the last day of the week he repents of the evil done each day, and thus makes the last day of the week his day of reconciliation, of prayer, of repentance, and of thanksgiving.

(3) For the coming week he prays for continued protection, goodness, and mercy. He commends himself to God and His grace.

(4) He reflects that all weeks, one after the other, will thus pass,

until at length the week arrives in which he will die. For that event he prepares himself by true faith in Jesus Christ and a holy and penitent conversation. Such sacred meditations should make a person devout, careful, grateful, and godly, causing him to look up to God as the source on high from which every good gift cometh down; to commit himself to divine grace; to remain in the love of Jesus. Thus he is in a condition to live as a saved sinner, according to God's will, and to die thus when his dying hour comes.

PRAYER.

The Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad. Hitherto hath the Lord helped me. Thus it is proper for me to speak, my God and Lord, now that I have reached the end of the week in safety. How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. Thou shielded them, Thou keepest them, Thou preservest them, and Thy mercies are renewed every morning. O my God, Thou hast spread Thy wings over me, Thou hast kept me in health and blessed me; Thou hast been my companion and preserved me; Thou hast shown me many benefits in body and soul and hast also suffered those dear to me to enjoy Thy protection and Thy grace. Surely, it is God who has done this; it is the Lord's doing that I have safely passed through this week. Therefore, bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.

Alas, how many have fallen during this week, while I still stand by Thy grace! To how many has the past week been a sad week of sorrow and crosses, while Thou hast suffered me to conclude it in peace and quietness. How many have suffered misery and anguish, while I have remained unharmed under

Thy protection. For all this let me offer Thee my love, praise, and fervent exaltation from my inmost soul. Receive my thanks for Thy protection and Thy grace; receive my thanks for Thy love and mighty aid; receive my thanks for all the benefits which Thou hast bestowed upon me in body and soul.

O my God, forgive unto me in mercy all the evil I have done this week. Oh, I am sorry; I repent; I am in distress on account of my sins; and I ask for mercy and for forgiveness of the sins which I have committed. For the sake of the blood and wounds of Jesus Christ spare me, and reward me not according to my works. In the strength of Thy Spirit I will during the coming week zealously avoid the sins which I have committed and serve Thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

My thought of life is oft amiss, I know not yet what ought to be, Or which were better, that or this. Dear Lord, choose Thou for me. Whether I run life's rugged way With limb and muscle strong and free, Or bear some load of pain each day, Dear Lord, choose Thou for me. Or want or wealth, or dearer yet The competence I fain would see, What measure of earth's goods I get Dear Lord, choose Thou for me. I would not wish for length of days, Though every age has ecstasy, I leave with Thee my yesterdays, My morrows choose for me. Thy will is best, is always best. No other good I crave of Thee, But just in Thy sweet will to rest, Dear Lord, choose Thou for me. Amen.

HYMN.

The breaking morn, in cheerful ray,
With many a promise opes the day,
Setting the sun upon his way
To tread his radiant journey.
So faith's fair springtime opens heaven,
When clouds and doubts are backward driven,
Revealing Christ to sinners given;
Their morning Sun of glory.

Then, as the robes of glittering dye,
The ruler of the mid-day sky,
With fruitful ardor from on high,
Blesses the world before him,
So Christ is risen virtue strong,
Our life, our victory, strength, and song,
In freedom bears our souls along
To serve and to adore Him.

And then, at eve, with "farewell sweet,"
The day retires, so soon to greet
Regions that wait his smile to meet
Its varied beauties blending.
So faith, in hopeful evening hour,
Calm in the Savior's chastened power,
Anchors beside earth's parting shore,
In sight of joys unending.

EVENING PRAYER FOR SATURDAY.

When I walk in darkness, the Lord is my light.
O loving and gracious God, the day and the week
are now ending; but Thy mercy endureth forever.
The mountains shall depart, and the hills be re-
moved; but Thy kindness shall not depart from
Thy children. It is by Thy everlasting grace that
I have been permitted to live through the week.
What I did not know at the beginning of the week
I know now: it was Thy will that I should reach
the end of this week in safety. Numerous have
been Thy blessings upon me during this week:
Thou hast heard my prayer, preserved me, imparted
good counsel to me, and hast been at my side. Not
a day passed but I received from Thee gifts of grace,
love, and bounty; yea, not an hour passed but rich
streams of Thy blessings were poured out upon me.
I have now received what I wished for at the be-

ginning of the week. Oh, how great is Thy grace, love, and mercy!

But now that the week is closing, I remember my sins. Numerous have been my transgressions in thought, wish, and desire, by commission and omission. I have not cared for my soul as faithfully as it was my duty to do. O Lord, Lord, forgive me these sins! O Lord Jesus, blot out with Thy holy blood the entire record of my sins during this week and let them remain pardoned and forgiven to me forever. O Lord, rebuke me not in Thine anger, neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure! Be Thou a wall of fire around me this night; let no misfortune, harm, and danger touch me and mine. Help me to cast all my worry upon Thee, and under Thy provident care, O my Father, let me sleep in peace.

I am now a week older and a step nearer to eternity. The end of this week reminds me of the end of my days, and that the last week, the last day, and the last hour of my life will surely come, and after that endless eternity. Therefore, help me so to employ each coming week, day, and hour that I may not be terrified at beholding Thee. Help me every day to make my heart ascend thither where I desire to be eternally. I am a sojourner here, and can claim only a night's rest on earth; my home and my eternal mansions are in heaven, where Thou wilt wipe away all tears from the eyes of Thy children, wilt apportion them the glorious bounties of Thy house, and wilt refresh them with everlasting joy.

I now lay aside my occupation and the works of my calling; I prepare myself for the coming Sunday, when I shall hear the preaching of Thy holy

Word. In order that I may hear it to my benefit, grant me the strength of Thy Holy Spirit that I may not be hindered in my devotion either by men or by my own heart.

I lay my body down to sleep; Peace is the pillow for my head: His ever-watchful eye will keep Its constant guard around my bed. Faith in Thy name forbids my fear: Oh, may Thy presence ne'er depart! And in the morning may I bear Thy loving-kindness on my heart. Amen.

A CHILD'S EVENING PRAYER.

Blessed Savior, hear me now,
Lowly at Thy feet I bow;
Let Thy watchful care this night
Keep me safe till morning light.

Bless, O Lord, my parents dear;
Keep them in Thy holy care;
Bless my brothers, sisters, too,
And our evil hearts renew.

Bless the sick on beds of pain;
Savior, give them health again;
Or prepare them, should they die,
For Thy mansions in the sky.

Bless the poor with needful good,
Clothe and give them daily food;
Thou who makest e'en birds Thy care,
Bless Thy creatures everywhere.

Lord, bestow a grateful heart
For the gifts Thou dost impart
To a little child like me,
Who depends alone on Thee.

All my sins, O Lord, forgive;
Fit me with Thyself to live
In that glorious home above
Purchased by Thy dying love.

SECOND PART.

For the Festival Seasons.

**In His Devotion during Holy Advent Tide the
Christian Meditates on the Coming of Christ
in the Flesh.**

MORNING PRAYER.

Gladdened and enraptured because of the multitude of blessings which Thy coming in the flesh has brought us, Thou only-begotten Son of God, I quit my couch and lift up my hands to Thee, from whom cometh all my help. Thou comest to be a guest in this world in order to rescue and save the world; hence Thou comest also for my benefit and to bless me, that I may have life in Thee, and may have it more abundantly. Why, then, should I not rejoice? Why should I not be glad?

O Jesus, Thou hast appeared in the form of sinful flesh for my benefit; Thou art come into the world for my sake; oh, come to me and into my heart! Sanctify it wholly; prepare it for Thyself in such a way that Thou mayest be able to make it Thy habitation. Strengthen my faith and fill me with Thy love, that I may prefer Thee to the world, its pleasures, and everything else. When the world with its sins, such as haughtiness, pride, anger, boastfulness, and other works of the flesh, approaches me and says to me: In this heart we will dwell, here we will reign, here we will take up our abode! let me resist them in Thy strength, and stoutly reply to them: Depart from me, sins! Begone, world! Here is the temple of the Lord! Away

with you! This is no place for you, and I have no room for you, you cannot make your home with me! My Jesus is with me. To Him alone I have yielded myself entirely; He shall reign over me; I shall remain His own in time and eternity. Oh, how happy I shall be if Thou abidest with me and I am enabled by Thee to overcome the world and all enemies of my soul!

O my Savior, Thou didst come into the world to save sinners; receive me and enter into my heart. Thou hast long ago, even before I was born, chosen my soul for Thy habitation, and hast prepared it for this purpose in Holy Baptism, when I was washed with Thy precious blood, and purified from all pollutions of the flesh. But I have departed from Thee, I have again defiled myself with many grievous sins. By my ungodly conduct I have often broken my baptismal covenant. I now return to Thee. I open the door of my heart again to Thee. I long for Thee with great earnestness. As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so longeth, so panteth my soul after Thee, my God and Savior; may it please Thee to come and enter into my heart. I vow eternal fidelity to Thee. Unite Thyself with me, that nothing may separate us. Let Thy Spirit henceforth be joined with my spirit, and lead me always in a straight path, that I may ever follow Thee, and cling to Thee, and through Thee obtain eternal salvation.

Thy heavenly strength sustain our heart That we may act the valiant part With Thee as our Reliance; Be Thou our Refuge and our Shield, That we may never quit the field, Bidding all foes defiance. Descend, Defend From all errors And earth's terrors: Thy salvation Be our constant consolation. Amen.

EXHORTATION.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh unto Thee: He is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass and upon a colt, the foal of an ass. *Zech. 9, 9.*

If there is a time which souls consecrated to God love to spend in devotion, it is certainly the time of the holy festivals on which the Christian Church contemplates the mercies of God. True, many nominal Christians spend the holy festival seasons partly in high living and voluptuousness, partly in pride and in parading their dresses, partly in idleness and unbecoming talk, and hence do not take the love and grace of the Most High to heart. But a believing child of God has an altogether different mind. For (1) he hails with joy each coming festival season, because in his devotion he is going to place before his mind the gift which the goodness of God has bestowed upon him. (2) During the holy season of Advent he meditates on the love of his heavenly Father, who spared not His only Son, but sent Him into the world to suffer and die, and thus acquire salvation for men. (3) He considers the ardent love of Jesus, who was clothed with our poor flesh and blood in order that He might bring us to heaven and eternal happiness. (4) He gives praises for the grace of the Holy Spirit, who has placed the gifts bestowed on men before the believer's soul, has made them their own, and causes them to recognize these gifts in such a vivid and effectual manner that they seem to have been bestowed this very day. (5) Accordingly, he makes this holy season a time of devotion and prayer, and begins and ends it with hearing and meditating upon the Word of God, with singing festival-hymns, and with a quiet and godly conversation.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, plenteous in mercy, Thou art come to seek and to save that which is lost. I thank Thee that through Thy protection and by Thy grace I have been permitted once more to reach this holy season. Grant me the strength of Thy Holy Spirit that I may spend it in Thy fear, in holy meditations, and to the edifying of my soul. Everlasting Son of God, who wast before the foundations of the world

were laid, Thou didst come in the flesh and wast made a true man, in order to make us happy and to save us. On account of our grievous fall into sin we could not come to Thee in heaven; therefore Thou camest to us on earth to lead us all to life everlasting. Through sin we had become aliens, yea, prisoners and enemies of God; but by Thy most holy Advent all our losses are to be made good. O grace abounding! O unspeakable love! For Thy sake, O Jesus, the aliens are to be made friends, the prisoners are to be released, the enemies of God are to be made His beloved, sinners are to become God's children, and the fallen are to be raised. O holy Advent! by which we who were condemned to death are to obtain life, by which we who were fallen from grace are to be clothed with glory and honor on Thy account. For this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Dearest Jesus, save me and lead me into the joys of Thy kingdom. Give me an attentive and obedient heart in this holy season, that I may diligently and reverently hear Thy holy Word, and receive and keep it in my heart. Let me during these holy days grow in faith, in the knowledge and love of Thee, and let me show forth the fruits of faith, such as chastity, humility, meekness, obedience, godliness, that Thy Advent may be also for me a blessed and salutary advent. Preserve me, that it may not have to be said of me: He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.

O Lord Jesus, I receive Thee in faith; I love Thee! Enter in, Thou Blessed of the Lord! Why

standest Thou without? By Thy grace I have prepared my heart for Thee. Enter into my heart; I will embrace Thee as my only Redeemer and Savior; I will make Thy merit and righteousness my own. Enter into my heart; from love of Thee I will gladly shun all worldly vanities, amusements, sins, and wickedness, in order that Thou alone mayest be the occupant of my soul and the ruler of my heart. Dwell in me, sanctify me for Thy possession, keep me in Thy grace. I repent of the sins which I have committed, and seek for grace in Thee. Therefore my sins shall no more condemn me. For if the Son shall make me free, I shall be free indeed. If God be for me, who can be against me?

O Jesus, Thou camest as a king; reign henceforth in my heart, that sin may have no more dominion over me. Thou camest as the Righteous One: I am unrighteous and a sinner worthy of condemnation; make me righteous, and bestow upon me the robe of Thy perfect righteousness. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness. Thou camest in poverty to make me spiritually rich in faith and the heavenly, imperishable treasures. Thou camest in humility; make me humble, that I may learn from Thee meekness and humility, and that I may on all occasions practise these virtues in my life. O King of Glory, enter by the gate of my heart; behold, enabled by Thy strength I open it wide for Thee. Govern me henceforth with Thy spirit, that until my blessed end I may remain Thy dwelling and temple.

Come, Thou Ransom long desired; Lo, the world for Thee is waking. Come, Thou Savior of mankind; Gates their bars for Thee are breaking. Come with all Thy heavenly grace; Lord, we long to see Thy face. Enter now my waiting heart, Glorious King and Lord most holy. Dwell in me and ne'er depart, Though I am but poor and lowly. Ah, what riches will be mine When Thou art my Guest Divine! My hosannas, Lord, accept And the palms I strew before Thee. Make my noblest powers adept In declaring Thy great glory. Plenteous merit, Lord, is Thine; Grant me faith that makes it mine. Hail! Hosanna, David's Son! Now, O Lord, salvation send us! In Thy kingdom here begun With all health and grace befriend us Now and through eternity. Hail! Hosanna, Lord, to Thee. Amen.

HYMN.

Lo, thy King is on the way —
 Words of joy to weary mortals!
 Now rejoice, my soul, and say:
 See, my King, my open portals!
 Come, O come, and be my Guest;
 All is Thine within my breast.

Come; for I am Thine indeed,
 Sealed by Thy baptismal laver.
 Let the Word of Grace I need,
 Blest Evangel of Thy favor,
 Come; Thy Word to me declare,
 That Thy way I may prepare.

Come; and take Thy place within,
 Every hateful thing expelling,
 Purge the house defiled by sin;
 Make it meet to be Thy dwelling.
 Come, and make me pure and good,
 Cleansed by Thy atoning blood.

Come in Thy great Sacrament,
 There to faith salvation giving;
 In each earnest penitent,
 By Thy blood and body living.
 Come, Lord Jesus, live in me,
 That my life may be in Thee.

Come, Thy Spirit with Thee, Lord,
E'en the Spirit who reveals Thee,
Teaches me Thy will and Word,
Intercedes for me and seals me.
Then my daily prayer can be,
Come, Lord Jesus, come to me.

PRAYER.

“Yea, He loveth the people!” Thus, O loving and lovable Lord, I am forced to exclaim, filled with wonder, at the close of this day. I have become convinced of the boundless love which Thou entertainest for poor mortals, not only by the innumerable blessings which Thou hast shown me and others in body and soul; but I recognize Thy love especially in this, that Thou didst not spare Thine only-begotten Son, but didst deliver Him in the place of all the lost children of Adam, and hence also in my place.

What an exceptional proof of Thy love hast Thou given me by this act! For my sake Thou hast caused Thine only-begotten Son, the Son of Thy love, Thine only Child, to become man, that as man He might be able to suffer torture, scourging, stripes, and even death, and thereby render satisfaction to Thy offended majesty, and redeem, justify, and save me. If some great man of this world were to sacrifice his most beautiful ring, his most valuable jewels, his choicest treasure, to save some wretched human being from his misery and make him happy, such an act would be admired and praised everywhere as an instance of the highest degree of man's love for man. If a king were to deliver one of his sons into captivity to obtain the

release of some prisoner of lesser rank from his chains and dungeon, men would imagine that they could not sufficiently extol and praise the love of such a monarch for his subjects. And yet, all this is as nothing in comparison with the love which Thou hast shown to the children of men by clothing Thy beloved Son in their flesh and blood, by sending Him in the fulness of time as man into this world.

A person who has been delivered out of misery by a great benefactor may come into better circumstances again, and may then render his benefactor many a useful service, and thus, in a measure, repay the benefits shown him. A person who has been freed from hard bondage by the goodness of his king can render himself useful after he has obtained his liberty. But I and my brethren according to the flesh cannot recompense Thee for what Thou hast done for us. We have nothing to give Thee; we are not able in the least to repay Thee for rescuing us from the perdition in which we were by nature, and for freeing us from the bonds of death with which we were bound. All these blessings have come to us because Thy Son has become man. Thy love has no equal; it passes all understanding. We can do nothing but humbly thank Thee, and cordially praise and magnify Thee. This is the only tribute by which our hearts can express their affection for Thee.

Therefore, blessed be Thy holy name for the manifestation of infinite love which Thou hast made to me by the sending of Thy Son into the world. Oh, let this love urge me to love Thee in return

with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my strength! Give me the ability to live according to Thy will and to cling to Thee. Wean my heart from the love of the world, its vanities, and sins; and kindle within me the flame of Thy divine love, that I may always please Thee. Grant that I may increase in love and in knowledge of Thee, that I may abide in faith, and so serve Thee in spirit that I may even here taste in my heart Thy sweetness, and ever thirst for Thee. Amen.

I STAND AND KNOCK.

I stand and knock, at holy Advent time,
Oh! happy, then, is he
Who, knowing well the Shepherd's voice,
Opens the door to Me.
The evening meal with him I'll hold,
And heavenly light and grace unfold.
I stand and knock.

I stand and knock. Without, it is so cold;
The snow lies o'er the land;
Like crystal columns, tall and straight,
The icy fir-trees stand,
And frozen are the hearts of mortals,
Who will unloose the tight-barred portals?
I stand and knock.

I stand and knock. Oh, couldst thou look
but once
Into My very face!
Couldst thou behold the crown of thorns,
The bloody nail-prints' trace!
So long have I been seeking thee,
My steps lead from th' accursed tree.
I stand and knock.

I stand and knock. The evening is so calm,
 So quiet; near and far
 The white earth sleeps; from yonder heav'n
 Looks down the evening star,
 In such still, sacred hour of night,
 To many a heart I've given light.
 I stand and knock.

I stand and knock. Say not, "It is the wind
 Rustling the branches sere";
 Thy Savior 'tis, thy Lord, thy God, My child;
 Ah, close not now thine ear!
 Though now I speak in whispers mild,
 Too soon, perchance, in storm-blasts wild.
 I stand and knock.

I stand and knock. Now would I be thy guest;
 But when this house of thine
 A ruin lies, then think, O soul,
 That thou shalt knock at Mine;
 Then, if thou hast welcomèd *Me*,
 I'll open heaven's gates to *thee*.
 I stand and knock.

HE COMETH.

O Daughter of Zion, rejoice in great gladness;
 Thy King and Commander at last draweth near.
 With rapturous praises, forsaking thy sadness,
 Rejoice, for His kingdom and glory appear.
 Thy longings are ending;
 Thy Lord is descending.

Though riding in meekness, so humbly, so lowly,
 Attended by cortège of meanest degree,
 Jehovah thus sendeth the Loved One, the Holy.
 Hosanna! He cometh, all gracious, to thee.
 To thee, ancient nation,
 He bringeth salvation.

Thy palms and thy voices employ in glad greeting,
 For now is the shame of thy bondage removed.
 Go forth with thy children, their praises repeating
 To Him who by prophets of old is approved.
 Thy gratitude voicing,
 Sing; sing with rejoicing.

The Root out of Jesse, Ensign of the people
 In fulness of time by Jehovah revealed;
 The Ransom of bondmen, the Strength of the feeble,
 The Secret of Ages no longer concealed;
 The Savior appearing,
 We welcome revering.

We bless Thee now coming, the Son of the Highest.
 O reign o'er our lives by Thy gracious constraint.
 When coming as Judge every nation Thou triest,
 May we by Thy mercy be spared Thy complaint;
 Thy merit atoning
 God grant us His owning.

Come quickly, Lord Jesus, with pow'r and great glory
 In clouds and with angels in splendid array;
 And grant us, redeemed, in that hour to adore Thee,
 To sing glad hosannas on Thy Judgment Day.
 From Thee ne'er to sever
 Our King then forever.

O how shall I receive Thee,
 How greet Thee, Lord, aright?
 All nations long to see Thee,
 My Hope, my heart's Delight!
 O kindle, Lord most holy,
 Thy lamp within my breast,
 To do in spirit lowly
 All that may please Thee best.

Fling wide the portals of your heart:
 Make it a temple set apart
 From earthly use for heaven's employ.
 Adorned with prayer and love and joy:
 So shall your Sovereign enter in,
 And new and noble life begin.
 To Thee, O God, be praise
 For Word, and deed, and grace.

The Believing Christian Meditates at Christmas on the Birth of Jesus Christ.

MORNING PRAYER.

In Thee, my God and Savior, my spirit rejoices
 at this moment that I rise from sleep and think of
 Thy holy conception and birth. My limited and
 feeble understanding cannot, indeed, comprehend
 and grasp the mystery great without controversy:
 God was manifest in the flesh. Nevertheless my
 soul is delighted with the contemplation of this

mystery, because Thy Word, which is the truth and cannot deceive me, assures me that this event has certainly taken place, and also reveals in no indistinct manner the mode and manner in which it occurred. Yet even here my reason must be silent, for it beholds a veil spread before these matters which it cannot penetrate, and which shall be drawn aside only in eternity.

Thy revealed Word describes very beautifully Thy conception and birth in the words of the angel announcing these events to Mary: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." In this description I find reasons enough for joy; and when I reverently contemplate it, joy flows through me like a river of life. I picture to myself how the Holy Spirit, as an all-wise and almighty architect, approached Mary; how He cleansed from all sins the tabernacle which Thy divinity was to occupy, filling it with His most holy gifts. I picture to myself next how this sanctified tabernacle was occupied by Thee, who art the Power of the Highest, and whose name is Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace; how this tabernacle became united with Thy divinity, and all Thy divine properties and prerogatives were communicated to the human nature which Thou didst assume. I picture to myself how by this very act, namely, by taking upon Thee flesh and blood in the same manner as children do, Thou hast sanctified our human nature and hast made us accepted with Thy Father in heaven.

What streams of delight must descend upon me when, on awaking, I ponder these matters in sacred

solitude! O my Jesus, by Thy incarnation Thou art become my Brother; how rich, how happy dost Thou make me! In Thee I now have all things. By Thee I can obtain all things. With Thee I can undertake and accomplish all things. Henceforth I will not despair in any tribulation, but will turn to Thee and confidently say: Jesus, my Brother, help me! No distress and no affliction henceforth shall discourage me; but I will firmly rely upon Thee, because Thou art my Brother, and because as such Thou lovest me and wilt surely have mercy on me.

In Thy incarnation, O my Jesus, Thou hast assumed my nature, and hast thereby become united with me. Make me also to share Thy divine nature, that I may lead a godly life and may submit myself wholly to the power and the ruling of Thy Spirit. Let the noble relationship in which I now stand to Thee keep me at all times from sin and from the fellowship of the world, that I may do nothing that would offend Thee. Let me prize Thy friendship higher than everything in the world. Let me serve Thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life. Let me love Thee constantly,—for to love Thee is better than all else,—in order that in life and in death, in time and in eternity, I may be found in Thy fellowship. O my Brother, my chosen Friend, what joy shall be mine when in the joy everlasting I shall behold Thee crowned with majesty, whom even here I have fervently loved; and when I shall be united with Thee forever! As I anticipate those joys, I rejoice in spirit; my heart is filled with joy. And why should I not rejoice, since by hope I am even now blessed and in heaven with Jesus, my Brother?

Here rests my heart and holds it fast; The Lord I love is First and Last, The End and the Beginning. I welcome death, for I shall rise Through Him to His own Paradise Above all tears and sinning, Amen! Amen! Come, Lord Jesus, Soon release us! With deep yearning, Lord, we look for Thy returning! Amen.

EXHORTATION.

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. *Gal. 4, 4. 5.*

If the birth of a royal prince causes comforting reflections and joy in the entire kingdom, the birth of Jesus Christ cannot fail to be a cause of joy to all men. The angels rejoice in the heavens above and proclaim to men tidings of great joy; why, then, should not the children of God rejoice? They should rejoice (1) over the love and mercy of God, who spared not His Son, but delivered Him up for us all. They should rejoice (2) over the loving-kindness of Jesus, who, though He is God and the Son of God, does not refuse to take upon Him the nature of man in a lowly virgin, and to become a little child.

(3) In quiet moments of devotion believers marvel at the wonderful counsel of God for our salvation, which no man and no angel could ever have conceived,—that the Son of God was to suffer in the place of men and thus reconcile them with God. (4) They marvel at the unmerited grace which God offers to men who were His enemies, *Rom. 5, 10*, and for which men did not pray, however much they needed it. (5) Therefore they return all the more fervent thanks to Him after the counsel of God for our salvation has been revealed to them; they enter gladly into the order of salvation by clinging to Jesus in faith, and by following Him in a godly and pious conversation. And thus the holy Christmas days become to them days of prayer, rejoicing, and thanksgiving.

PRAYER.

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I beseech Thee, O Lord; O Lord, I beseech Thee, send now

prosperity. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Arise, my soul. Employ this festival for the glory of God and thy edification and say: O holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, would that every drop of my blood were a tongue, that I might praise Thy love, grace, and mercy!

God is love! This truth my heart and mind perceive on this holy festival. Thy love has found a means for bringing grace to men, of which neither angels nor men could have thought,—that the second person of the Godhead was to become man, to sanctify and cleanse our human nature. O gracious Jesus! everlasting praise and thanks be unto Thee for Thy incarnation and birth. Thou becomest a child of man, that we may become children of God. Now our human nature is truly exalted: Thou hast united it with Thy divinity, and hast brought it into the council of the Holy Trinity. O love! O grace! as surely as the human nature is united with the divine, so surely everlasting friendship, everlasting reconciliation, everlasting peace, and everlasting love has been established between God and men. When God beholds us in His Son, He cannot but be gracious unto us. For He who spared not His beloved Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things—the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, peace, life, and salvation?

Oh, the greatness of the love of Jesus, who was willing to be born a tender infant, that He might sanctify our sinful birth! He increased in wisdom and stature that He might sanctify our youth. Welcome to earth, Thou noble Guest, Through whom the sinful world is blest: Thou comest to

share my misery; What thanks shall I return to Thee? O dearest Friend of souls! My Brother! I now have in Thee a Helper in affliction, a Deliverer in tribulation, a Savior when my sins terrify me, an Aid in need, a Support in death. Thou art my Light; oh, enlighten me! Thou art the Way that leads me to the Father. Thou art the Truth which teaches me to know that Life which gives life. Thou art my Righteousness; by Thee I am justified and saved. Thou art my High Priest; Thou intercedest for me and blessest me. Thou art the Lamb sacrificed for my trespasses, the full Ransom for my transgressions.

O precious Holy Spirit, how great is Thy love in having this comfort, this joy, this salvation proclaimed to me again! From my heart I rejoice on this holy festival and say: My Jesus is mine; His heaven is mine. This Child is born for me, aye, for me; this Son is given for me, aye, for me. He has acquired and given also to me, aye, to me, the grace of God, sonship with Him, and the eternal inheritance which is reserved in heaven for us.

O Jesus, whom in spirit I behold and gaze upon in the manger, how lovely, how kind art Thou! Grant me grace never to forget Thee, but to keep Thee ever in my heart, on my lips, and before my eyes. O my Salvation, sanctify me; I yield myself to Thee with all that I am and have. O my Bridegroom, embrace me. For Thee I will live, Thee I will serve, from love of Thee I renounce the world and all the pleasures of this life. Let my heart be Thy manger and Thy dwelling in time and eternity. Enfold and keep me in Thy love, that I may have rest, peace, comfort, safety, and the salvation of my

soul. Now that my Jesus is become man, I am not lost. If I believe in Him, I shall not perish, but have everlasting life. God is my Friend, because by faith I am in Jesus, and because Jesus is in me. I do not fear death; for in Him I have life. I do not fear the accusation of my conscience on account of my sins; for Jesus, my Advocate, is with me.

O Savior of our race, Welcome indeed Thou art, Blessed Redeemer, Fount of grace, To this my longing heart! Light of the world, abide Through faith within my heart; Leave me to seek no other guide, Nor e'er from Thee depart. Thou art the Life, O Lord! Sole Light of Life Thou art. Let not Thy glorious rays be poured In vain on my dark heart. Star of the East, arise! Drive all my clouds away; Guide me till earth's dim twilight dies Into the perfect day. Amen.

HYMN.

Immanuel, we sing Thy praise,
Thou Prince of life and Fount of grace,
Thou Flower of heaven and Star of morn,
Thou Lord of lords, Thou Virgin-born.
Hallelujah!

With all Thy saints Thee, Lord, we sing,
Praise, honor, thanks to Thee we bring,
That Thou, O long-expected Guest,
Hast come at last to make us blest!
Hallelujah!

For Thee, since first the world was made,
So many hearts have watched and prayed;
The patriarchs' and prophets' throng
For Thee have hoped and waited long.
Hallelujah!

Above all others longed for Thee
Thy people's king and shepherd, he
With whom Thou, Lord, so well wert pleased
When with His harp Thy name he praised.
Hallelujah!

Oh, that the Savior soon would come
To break our bonds and lead us home!
Oh, that He might salvation bring!
Then Jacob would rejoice and sing.
Hallelujah!

Now Thou art here, Thou ever Blest!
In lowly manger Thou dost rest;
Who makest all things great art small;
Naked Thyself, who clothest all.
Hallelujah!

All heavens are Thine, yet Thou dost come
To sojourn in a stranger's home;
A mother's milk dost not despise
Who art the joy of angels' eyes.
Hallelujah!

Thou hast set bounds to earth and sea,
Yet swaddling-bands encircle Thee;
Thou'rt God — a bed of straw Thou hast;
Thou'rt man — yet art the First and Last.
Hallelujah!

From Thee above all gladness flows,
Yet Thou must bear such bitter woes;
The Gentiles' Light and Hope Thou art,
Yet findest none to soothe Thy heart.
Hallelujah!

The sweetest Friend of man Thou art.
Yet many hate Thee in their heart;
By Herod's heart Thou art abhorred,
Yet Thou art our Salvation, Lord.
Hallelujah!

But I, Thy humblest servant, may
Confess my love and freely say,
I love Thee truly, but I would
That I might love Thee as I should.
Hallelujah!

I have the will, the power is weak,
Yet, Lord, my humble offering take,
And graciously the love receive
Which my poor heart to Thee can give.
Hallelujah!

Thou to be weak dost not disdain,
Dost choose the things the world deems vain,
Art poor and needy, and content
To suffer poverty and want.
Hallelujah!

Thou sleepest on the lap of earth;
The manger where Thou at Thy birth
Wast laid to rest, the hay, the stall
Were mean and miserable all.
Hallelujah!

And therefore doth my courage rise,
Me also Thou wilt not despise;
O dearest Lord, Thy tender grace
Fills me with hope and happiness.
Hallelujah!

Although I've passed in sin my days,
And wandered far from wisdom's ways,
Yet Thou for this to earth hast come
To bring the wand'ring sinner home.
Hallelujah!

Had I no load of sin to bear,
Thy grace, O Lord, I could not share;
In vain hadst Thou been born for me,
If from God's wrath I had been free.
Hallelujah!

Now fearlessly I come to Thee,
From every grief Thou mak'st me free;
Thou bear'st the wrath, dost death destroy,
And turnest sorrow into joy.
Hallelujah!

Thou art my Head, my Lord divine,
I am Thy member, wholly Thine,
And by Thy Spirit's gracious power
Will seek to serve Thee evermore.
Hallelujah!

I'll sing loud hallelujahs here
With joyful spirit year by year;
And in Thy courts of joy above
Forever I will sing Thy love.
Hallelujah!

EVENING PRAYER.

My Jesus, my Immanuel, my King and my Kinsman, I am still kneeling in spirit at Thy manger and pondering Thy holy incarnation. And how could I better close this day which the Lord hath made, and prepare for a sweet and refreshing sleep, than by such meditations? I acknowledge Thee, O incarnate Savior, as the true Messiah, as the Redeemer of the world, sprung from the house and lineage of David; as the Messiah in whom all things have been fulfilled that the prophets have spoken. Thou wast born at the exact time, at the exact place, in the particular family and of the chosen mother, appointed, indicated, and made known by the heavenly Father through His messengers even in the days of the old covenant. Why, then, should I not acknowledge Thee as the true Savior of the world, and heartily rejoice at Thy manifestation in the flesh? What the fathers most desired, What the prophets' heart inspired, What they longed for many a year, Stands fulfilled in glory here.

When I think of this event and ponder the infinite blessing that has come to me on account of it, my heart leaps for joy. Thou art the supreme and

exalted God; Thou wast before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and world were formed; Thou shalt remain when all these shall have fallen into ruin. Thou art the eternal Jehovah, Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, who art, and who wast, and who art to come. And yet Thou dost not despise the human race, but to save mankind Thou dost become the humblest, the most despised and rejected of men. O the depth of this grace and love! How happy am I to behold a Redeemer such as Thou art lying in the manger!

Oh, let me not go away from Thy manger without having my soul aroused; but let all that I observe in Thy human birth contribute to my sanctification and the strengthening of my faith. Thou art born at night: help me to flee the darkness of sin, and always to walk as in the day, in Thy light. Thou camest on earth when stillness and rest prevailed everywhere: let me in Thee attain to a true rest of my soul, and escape from the turmoil of the world, to the end that when my heart is quieted, Thou mayest become its guest. Seeking Thee diligently in spirit, O my Immanuel, I find Thee at an inn: grant me the grace to regard this world as an inn, in which I am to tarry only a few years and hours, that I may in time direct my heart to that place where I wish to be forever, and that I may not neglect to enter into Thy rest, nor drop out of the race. Thou chocest to enter this world in a dark stable, in an unbecoming place: grant that I may renounce all ease, and that in this life I may be content with whatsoever Thy goodness sends me, or in whatever condition it may place me. Thou art

lying in a cradle wrapped in swaddling-clothes:
wrap Thyself in my heart and let it be Thine abode.

How happy shall I be if Thou wilt graciously
fulfil all these desires of my heart! I doubt not that
Thou hearest me; I firmly believe that Thou wilt
still my longing. Perfectly quiet and content, there-
fore, I now lay me down to sleep and rest in Thy
arms, and pray:

Ah! dearest Jesus, holy Child, Make Thee a bed, soft un-
defiled, Within my heart, that it may be A quiet chamber kept
for Thee. Amen.

THE POVERTY OF CHRIST.

The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but
the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head. *Matt. 8, 20.*

O my King, and was it so,
Didst Thou suffer all this woe?
Didst Thou wander thus forlorn,
Bearing poverty and scorn;
Lord of all the realms above,
Reft of home and human love,
In the world that Thou hadst made
Nowhere couldst Thou lay Thy head?

If we could at all conceive
All the glory Thou didst leave;
All the splendor of the throne
That for us Thou didst disown;
Catch but one imperfect ray
Of Thine everlasting day,
And in that supernal light
See Thy majesty aright,—

How could we believe that Thou
To these human griefs couldst bow;
How, amidst these lower things,
Recognize the King of kings:
Washing the disciples' feet,
Sitting with the poor at meat,
Bearing daily pain and loss,
Dying on the shameful cross?

Only as Thyself hast shown
What the glory of Thy throne;
What, in all the realms of light,
Is the source of chief delight;
What, in all Thy life below,
Made Thee bear Thy load of woe;
By the truth all truth above,
We know Thee, for "God is Love."

EPIPHANY.

Lead us, O Lord, as once of old
Thou led'st the Magi to the fold;
Show us the light of that clear star
That shone for them in lands afar.

Warm Thou our hearts with zeal to seek
O'er rugged pathways dark and bleak,
Till, by Thy star in safety led,
We, too, have found the manger-bed.

O give us minds our King to own
And gladly lay our burdens down:
Our gift of gold that it may bring
Great honors to the Infant King,

Our frankincense and myrrh to prove
The truth and reverence of our love;
Our sins all at the manger-bed
To take sweet pardon in their stead.

Receive our grateful, humble praise,
For Thy revealed, saving grace;
Strengthen our faith, all doubts remove,
Inspire us with redeeming love.

Then send us forth, O Lord, again
To bear the tidings to all men;
Let nevermore the star grow dim
That lights our hearts with love for Him.

The Believing Christian Prays and Gives Thanks to God at the Close of the Year.

MORNING PRAYER.

O Lord, my God, the Father of all mercies, as I open my eyes, I now behold the light of day for the last time in this year, in which I have been made fully sensible that Thou art gracious, full of compassion, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Not a day, yea, not an hour of the year that is now departing, has passed away but Thou hast manifested all these glorious attributes towards me.

Thou hast been gracious towards me; for Thou hast, without my merit or worthiness, shown me so many favors. Thou hast given me food, drink, nourishment, and hast not suffered me to lack any good thing. Thou hast been gracious to me; for when I called upon Thee, Thou hast forgiven my sins and iniquities for the sake of my Redeemer. Thou hast been gracious to me; for Thou hast taken away all punishments which I had accumulated by my malice, transgressions, and sins. Instead of inflicting punishment on me as I deserved, Thou hast showered on me the blessings of Thy salvation.

And Thy compassion towards me has been equal to Thy grace. No need, no misery, no tribulation, was allowed to befall or to come nigh me, but Thy tender, fatherly heart melted with compassion, and Thou hadst pity on me. Scarcely had my need reached its extremity, when it was seen to be Thy opportunity. Scarcely had sorrow visited me, when Thou didst begin to turn my sorrow into joy. Scarcely did I cry to Thee, when Thou heardest me; yea, Thou answeredst before I cried a second time.

Oh, the mercy of my God, who has also in this year borne with me in patience and long-suffering! When I was overtaken by weakness, Thou didst forbear. When I sinned against Thee in my haste, Thou didst remit the debt which I had incurred. When, after departing from Thee, I came back a humble penitent, Thou didst receive me again. Oh, the riches of the patience and the long-suffering which Thou hast thus shown me!

And in the same manner Thou hast shown by Thy dealings with me that Thou art abundant in goodness. By Thy goodness Thou hast preserved my life, sustained and kept me in health, so that before many others I can now glorify Thy love and can say to Thy praise that Thou hast done all things well, and that all, aye, indeed, all things have been well arranged by Thee.

It is from Thy great truth and faithfulness that all Thy dealings with me have flown. In accordance with Thy faithfulness Thou fulfillest all promises which Thou hast made, and surely keepest truth with men. In accordance with Thy faithfulness, therefore, so many blessings have been showered upon me that I am not able to recount them all. What, now, shall I render to Thee, O my God, for all Thy benefits to me? I am altogether unable to repay Thee. At present, therefore, mercifully accept my feeble stammering for an offering of praise and gratitude: Thanks be unto Thee for all mercies; thanks for all grace!

Deal with me in the future as Thou hast dealt with me in the past. Let me spend this day in Thy fear, that to-day as well as through all eternity I may praise and glorify Thy name.

O that I had a thousand voices, A mouth to speak with thousand tongues! My heart, which in the Lord rejoices, Then would proclaim in grateful songs To all, wherever I might be, What great things God hath done for me. Lord, I will tell, while I am living, Thy goodness forth with every breath, And greet each morning with thanksgiving, Until my heart is still in death; Yea, when at last my lips grow cold, Thy praise shall in my sighs be told. O Father, deign Thou, I beseech Thee, To listen to my earthly lays; A nobler strain in heav'n shall reach Thee, When I with angels hymn Thy praise, And learn amid their choirs to sing Loud hallelujahs to my King. Hallelujah! Amen!

EXHORTATION.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. Ps. 103, 1. 2.

If devout souls and grateful hearts rejoice greatly in God when He has permitted them to pass a week or a month in safety, why should they not increase their joy many times when, with God's help, they have lived through an entire year? O how much suffering may come to us in a single day! How much more in a whole year! When a pious Christian beholds the end of a year, he lifts up his heart, voice, and hands to heaven, and concludes the year with prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.

Nor is he satisfied merely to repeat such a current phrase: God be praised and thanked; this year, too, is past! No; (1) he thanks God, because throughout the year the holy Word of God has been preached to him for the sanctification of his soul, and he has been shown the way to heaven; likewise, because by means of the Lord's Supper God has again and again furnished him new strength and ability to practise godliness and to bring forth the fruits of faith. (2) He asks himself whether he has grown in piety during the year; and what age he has attained in the inner man according to the new birth, now that he has rounded out another year according to his old sinful birth. (3) He prays God heartily and fervently to forgive him all the sins he has committed, whether they were done knowingly or unknowingly. (4) Furthermore, he praises God for the many temporal blessings which God has granted him by sustaining him, providing for him, protecting, delivering,

preserving, blessing, guarding, and attending him. (5) If God did send him sickness, sorrow, and tribulation, and again did deliver him from these evils, he should offer special thanks, and at the end of the year recall, as far as possible, the blessings which he or his family received each week and each month, in order that the last days of the year may become days of praise, prayer, thanksgiving, and repentance. And (6) while doing these things, he also invokes the grace of God upon himself for the coming year.

PRAYER.

What shall I render unto the Lord for all His goodness and faithfulness which He has shown me? The Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad. Thus, O Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, my soul, rejoicing in Thy grace, says, now that by Thy aid and protection I have again completed a year in safety. How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God; therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures. For with Thee is the fountain of life; in Thy light shall we see light.

My God, the days in a year are many; but Thy benefactions are more. The hours and minutes in a year can be counted; but the benefits which Thou hast shown me cannot be numbered. I thank Thee that during this year Thou hast caused Thy Word to be preached to me in truth and purity, and thereby hast shown me the way to heaven and to my everlasting salvation. Seal all that I have heard in my heart, and grant me Thy Holy Spirit that I may order my life accordingly. I thank Thee that Thou hast many times given me Thy holy body and blood to eat and to drink in the Holy Supper;

grant that it may tend to the strengthening of my faith and to the sanctification of my life. I thank Thee that Thou hast oftentimes forgiven my sins and averted the punishment which I had deserved; give me strength to avoid sins in the coming year, and not to commit them again wilfully. I thank Thee that Thou hast blessed my calling, hast provided food and clothing for me, granted me health, turned away the misfortune with which I was threatened, lightened my cross, and graciously regarded me in my distress. Thou hast guarded me as the apple of Thine eye; Thou hast shielded me from my foes round about me, who sought to destroy my soul. Thou hast heard me in the day of trouble, and hast permitted my prayer to ascend beyond the clouds and come before Thy throne. In my sorrow Thou hast sent me help from the sanctuary and strengthened me out of Zion. Thou hast poured out Thy blessings upon me; when I cried to Thee, Thou hast not hid Thy face from me. O loving Father, Thou hast led me as Thy child by Thine hand. Thou mighty King hast protected me, Thy subject, against all my foes. Thou faithful Shepherd hast made me, Thy sheep, to lie down in green pastures. Thou hast preserved my life, while others went to destruction. Thy goodness and faithfulness have followed me everywhere, from the beginning to the end of the year. Thy wisdom has led me; Thy love has covered me; Thy help has gladdened me; Thy grace has kept me; Thy omnipotence has rescued me on all occasions; Thy tender, fatherly hand has given me everything; Thine all-seeing eye has kept watch over me, and preserved my going out and coming in; and no evil

has befallen me. Therefore, O taste and see that the Lord is good! Behold what great things He has done for my soul!

If at times Thou didst make me experience great and multiplied anguish, Thou didst also grant me life again. If at times my heart was sorely troubled, Thy comfort delighted my soul. If many a time danger and distress came near me, Thy help was also near, and Thy angel kept me in all my ways and delivered me from the mouth of the lion.

O my God, mercifully forgive me all my sins which I have committed this year. Do not punish me in the new year on account of them, but pardon me for Jesus' sake. Lord, remember not the sins of my youth nor my transgressions; according to Thy mercy remember Thou me for Thy goodness' sake.

O Lord God, I will now close this year with prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. I humbly beseech Thee to remain my Shield and my gracious God also in the new year. Keep Thy protecting hand over me, and in the days to come let me be commended to Thy care, Thy love and grace.

To God, the Father of all love, The God of earth and heaven, The mighty God who reigns above, Be praise and glory given! With healing balm my soul He fills, And every pain and sorrow stills: To God all praise and glory! Amen.

HYMN.

The old year now hath passed away,
We thank Thee, Christ, our Lord, to-day
That Thou hast kept us through the year
When danger and distress were near.

We pray Thee, O eternal Son,
Who with the Father reign'st as one,
To guard and rule Thy Christendom
Through all the ages yet to come.

Take not Thy saving Word away,
Our souls' true comfort, staff, and stay;
Abide with us, and keep us free
From all false doctrines graciously.

O help us to forsake all sin,
A new and holier course begin;
From last year's sins, Lord, hide Thy face,
In this new year grant us Thy grace, —

That as true Christians we may live,
Or die in peace that Thou canst give,
To rise again when Thou shalt come,
And enter our eternal home.

There shall we thank Thee, and adore,
With all the angels evermore.
Lord Jesus Christ, increase our faith
To praise Thy name through life and death.

EVENING PRAYER.

For the last time in this year I now bend my knees before Thee, O my God, who hast mercy on me, and seek nothing but Thy grace and peace. I know that I have many times angered and grieved Thee in the past twelve months. I know that I have often transgressed Thy commandments, and have not always walked in the way I should have walked. I know that by my disobedience I have merited Thy wrath, Thy disfavor, and Thy just punishment. But I also know that Thou graciously receivest penitent sinners for Jesus' sake, and forgivest them their iniquities, transgressions, and sins.

It is for this very reason that I now cast myself before Thy throne and cry for mercy. O Lord, remember not the sins of my youth; according to Thy mercy remember me for Thy goodness' sake. Enter

not into judgment with me; for I am as little able to be justified in Thy sight as other men. Therefore cleanse me from all my sins, also from secret faults. If during this year I failed to listen as devoutly and attentively as I should have done to Thy revealed Word, which makes me wise unto salvation, forgive me my inattention, and let me henceforth be changed from being a mere hearer into being a doer of Thy Word. If I have not loved Thee and my neighbor as behooved me, remove from my heart all coldness and kindle the fire of the divine love in my soul, that I may love Thee with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind, with all my strength, and my neighbor as myself. If in my vocation and in the works of my calling I have not shown proper faithfulness, forgive me in Thy great mercy, and grant that in future I may better apply the talent which Thou hast entrusted to me, and that at all times I may be found a good steward, and may be able to face Thee when Thou shalt call upon me to render my account. There is forgiveness with Thee, O my God; therefore I seek forgiveness with Thee. Now that the year is closing, blot out the record of my guilt, which is great indeed; cancel it with the precious blood of my Savior, which I apprehend by faith. Let my sins vanish like mist from before Thine eyes. Remove them far from me, and remember them no more forever, lest in the new year I should have to appear in Thy sight as a debtor.

Moreover, take me still under Thy gracious protection this night, and be a wall of fire around me, that no harm may come to me. Should this night prove the last for me In this dark vale of tears,

Then lead me, Lord, in heav'n to Thee And my elect compeers. And thus I live and die to Thee, Thou Sabaoth strong indeed! In life and death Thou helpst me From every fear and need. But if according to Thy counsel I am destined to increase the years of my life; if, on awaking, I am to enter into a new year, let Thy goodness accompany me. Lead me in Thy paths; make me godly in truth and deed; guide me in an even way, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me, that I may live unto Thee, serve and obey Thee. Yea, my God, this only thing I ask of Thee before I fall asleep: give me a new mind and spirit in the new year, a spirit which shall unhesitatingly perform what Thy commandment bids me do, in order that my spirit, together with my soul and body, may remain the abode of Thy Spirit.

O Thou mighty God, now hearken To the prayer Thy child hath made; Jesus, while the night-hours darken, Be Thou still my Hope, my Aid; Holy Ghost on Thee I call, Friend and Comforter of all, Hear my earnest prayer, O hear me! Lord, Thou hearest, Thou art near me. Amen.

The Believing Christian Prays at the Beginning of a New Year.

MORNING PRAYER.

O my God and Father, what am I to ask of Thee now that I appear in prayer before Thy throne during the first hours of this year to which Thy goodness has extended my life? Three things I ask of Thee in childlike confidence, and I trust that Thou wilt deny me none of them.

My first petition is, that Thou wouldst protect,

cover, and sustain me in this new year with Thy strong and mighty arm. During our earthly pilgrimages here below we human beings are subject to many changes and exposed to many dangers which can easily ruin and destroy us, if we are not guarded and delivered from them by Thy divine power. Therefore graciously avert from me the manifold calamities with which I might be visited. When I am threatened with danger, take me under Thy wings that it may not reach me. When sorrow, tribulation, and trouble would approach me, be Thou my Protector, and guard and preserve me from them. But if it is Thy will that I am to suffer some of the afflictions of this present time, let me patiently bear them, accept them as a chastisement from Thy hand, and submit my will to Thine. Be present with me in hours of anguish, and let me not lose heart. Finally, let me speedily behold Thy help, and let me find my delight in Thy favor.

The second petition which I offer most humbly is, that Thou wouldst let Jesus dwell in my heart at all times. My Savior has prepared my heart for His temple at my baptism; He has occupied it as His dwelling, and united Himself with me before I had knowledge of myself. Yea, though I have often driven Him from me by my sins and forfeited His communion, He has come in unto me again when His grace led me to repentance. Oh, therefore, let not this precious treasure be taken from me! Strengthen my faith in His name. Let me love and esteem my Jesus above everything. Let me by Thy power follow in His holy footsteps, and ever let that mind be in me which was in Him also, in order that I may at

all times be most intimately united with Him and please Thee for His sake.

Finally, I beseech Thee in deepest humility of my heart to let Thy holy angels be with me during this year and accompany me in all my ways. Thou sendest forth these ministering spirits to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation. Moreover, Thou art not willing that any should perish, but wilt that all should inherit eternal life. Accordingly I am one of those who are to derive comfort from the blessed service of these perfect spirits who are ever about Thy throne; and for this very reason I pray earnestly for the companionship of Thy angels. Give them charge over me that they may keep me in all my ways. Let them encamp and be a bulwark round about me that no evil can come nigh me, and even Satan, though he were transformed into an angel of light, can have no power to harm or overwhelm me. Let me ever bear in mind that Thy angels are with me, that I may be careful not to sin, and that I may suffer myself to be guided in an even path.

O my God and Father, if Thou wilt grant me this threefold petition, I shall remain unharmed during this year, and this year will be one of which I shall have to say at its close: It has pleased me. Then my soul will remain full of light, power, and strength; I shall grow in faith and holiness, and pursue my calling in good health. Therefore, if Thou wilt grant me what I have now prayed of Thee, I shall have everything in bodily and spiritual blessings that can make me happy. And since Thou desirest the true happiness of all men, gra-

ciously grant me for this new year what I have prayed. Hear my first prayer to Thee in this year. Give me what I have desired in meekness, and be merciful unto me; and I shall ever praise Thee with joyful lips, and tell what Thou hast done for me.

All this Thy hand bestoweth. Thou Life, whence our life floweth; To me and all believers Grant, Lord, these New Year's favors.

EXHORTATION.

Let the beauty of the Lord, our God, be upon us; and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it. *Ps. 90, 17.*

Presumptuous persons frequently, and at times also timid minds, would like to know at the beginning of a year, whether it will be a prosperous year. However, it is in no man's power to make this known to any one; for the Lord alone knows what is going to be. Accordingly, this advice may be given to each and every one, — and this is also a pious custom of godly persons, — (1) that on entering a new year we should begin it with thanksgiving, praising the goodness of the Most High, who has permitted us to begin a new year in spite of the many tempests of suffering and floods of tribulation through which we have had to pass. To be sure, if a ship has been blessed with a great good fortune when it has passed through storms and billows, we, too, have to thank God upon our knees when He has permitted us to begin a new year in happiness and good health.

(2) Devout hearts will turn from thanksgiving to prayer, asking the goodness of the Most High to protect, govern, and preserve them in the future. They pray: Leave me not, neither forsake me in this new year, O God of my salvation! They commit to the gracious protection of God their body, their soul, and all that is theirs.

(3) Moreover, they are zealous in the new year to become more devout and godly. They resolve that, with the help of God, this year shall belong to the new life into which they were born. Surely, when aged people boast the great number of years they have lived, and yet are earthly-minded and devoted to the world,

they have no greater honor than any aged Jew or heathen, who may even surpass them in number of years. For godliness, being a fruit of faith and indwelling grace, is an ornament to both young and old.

PRAYER.

Lord, Lord, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and of great faithfulness, Thou art from everlasting to everlasting, and with Thee there is no variableness neither shadow of turning. Behold, under Thy protection I have again entered upon a new year. How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God; therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; the river of God is full of water.

My God and Father, during the past year I have fully experienced all this; therefore I shall begin the new year in Thy name with prayer, sighings, and supplications. Lord, be pleased to hear my voice early, on the very threshold of the new year; give ear to me in its very first hours. O Lord, I know not what may befall me during this new year. A year is long; its days are many. Human misery there is manifold, and calamities which may befall men are innumerable. Therefore I come to Thee, O mighty and loving God, and wish to commend myself at its very beginning to Thy mercy and faithfulness. Oh, now that all things are about to be made new; the earth is again to be covered with green herbs; the sun is ascending higher and higher, and everything is being filled with new vigor; let Thy goodness and mercy be renewed upon me. I commit my soul into Thy fatherly mercy and protection: guard it against sin, that

I may not contaminate it by wilful and wanton trespasses. Lord Jesus, sanctify, wash, and cleanse me with Thy holy blood. God Holy Ghost, dwell in my soul, and let it be Thy temple. Oh, what a blessed year will this be for me, if I, O heavenly Father, abide in Thy grace and live as Thy child! Oh, how happy I shall be, if I shall abide in Thy fellowship, O Jesus! Oh, how beautifully I shall be arrayed, Thou precious Holy Spirit, if Thou wilt dwell in me and rule me! If the King's daughter is all glorious within, I too, thus adorned, shall please Thee.

And since Thou hast hitherto bestowed on me the precious gift of life and health, be pleased, if it be Thy fatherly will, and if it be for the salvation of my soul, graciously to preserve this gift for me during this year, in order that I may become more fit to serve Thee and to discharge the duties of my calling. But if it should please Thee in Thy holy counsel to visit me with sickness or pain, do not depart from me. When I suffer torment, alleviate my suffering, and let me also behold the hour when Thou appearest to refresh me and to relieve me of my entire burden. O Lord, my God, hold Thy protecting hand over my loved ones and my possessions. Be a wall of fire around me, as Thou wast around Elisha. Hedge us round about as Thou didst the house of Job.

Grant me the power of Thy Holy Spirit that I may become truly godly during this year, and conduct myself as a true child of God, that I may be devout in my prayers, and a diligent hearer and doer of Thy Word. Grant that in the new year the condition of my heart may be described thus: "Old

things are passed away; behold, all things are made new." Let there be in me a new longing for Thee, new love towards my fellow-man, a new zeal to enter into communion with Thee and to abide therein. Oh, sanctify me wholly, that my entire spirit and soul and body may be kept blameless until the day of Jesus Christ. Give me new zeal in my Christian religion, that I may grow and increase in whatsoever is good. Bless my calling and my labor; bless my going out and my coming in. Give me what Thy hand of blessing has in store for me.

However, let me also reflect at the beginning of this year that some time the last year of my life will begin, in order that I may always keep myself in readiness, be in a state of repentance and faith, have my lamp burning and my loins girt to receive Thee with rejoicing, O my Bridegroom and gracious God, and to enter into the kingdom which Thou hast prepared for me from the beginning. Give me a new mind and a new spirit in accordance with Thy will, which may teach me unwaveringly to fulfil what Thy command bids me do, and which will keep me, body and soul, a habitation of Thy Spirit.

And grant, Lord, when the year is over, That it for me in peace may close; In all things care for me, and cover My head in time of fear and woes; So may I, when my years are gone, Appear with joy before Thy throne. Amen.

HYMN.

Standing at the portal
Of the op'ning year,
Words of comfort meet us,
Hushing every fear;
Spoken through the silence
By our Father's voice,

Tender, strong, and faithful,
Making us rejoice.
Onward, then, and fear not,
Children of the day!
For His Word shall never,
Never pass away.

I, the Lord, am with thee,	He will never fail us,
Be not thou afraid	He will not forsake;
I will help and strengthen,	His eternal covenant
Be not thou dismayed!	He will never break.
Yea, I will uphold thee	Resting on His promise,
With My own right hand,	What have we to fear?
Thou art called and chosen	God is all-sufficient
In My sight to stand.	For the coming year.
Onward, then, and fear not,	Onward, then, and fear not,
Children of the day!	Children of the day!
For His Word shall never,	For His Word shall never,
Never pass away.	Never pass away.

EVENING PRAYER.

Great and exalted God, the trust which I placed in Thee has not been put to shame on the first day of the new year. I have experienced Thy goodness and love to-day. Thou hast given me a cheerful heart; Thou hast caused Thy Word to be proclaimed to me; Thou hast satisfied and overwhelmed me with many blessings. Praise, glory, and thanksgiving be unto Thee with all my heart.

Thou hast graciously heard my prayer hitherto, hearken again to my cry now that I lie down to rest. At the dawn of this year and day I have prayed for Thy favor, Thy blessing, and Thy grace. I will now add a humble entreaty in behalf of others, because according to Thy command it behooves me to make supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men. Let those whom Thou hast appointed magistrates on earth discharge their office in uninterrupted prosperity. Crown all who bear Thy image and are Thy ministers with health; make them careful and give them wise counsels that they may discharge their office properly. Let them always be

mindful why they have been placed above others by Thee, in order that they may administer justice, rewarding the good and punishing the evil; and that all who are subject to their rule may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty.

Furnish those whom Thou hast sent out to proclaim the Gospel of peace with the plenteous gifts of Thy Spirit. Give them ability and strength to conduct their important office. Let them always open their mouths joyfully to Thy praise. Grant that they may freely and without fear proclaim the divine truth, in order that through their ministry Thy kingdom on earth may be spread more and more, and a communion of people may be gathered who take comfort in Thy grace. Let the entire Christian Church be commended to Thee also in this year. Deal with each and every one as a loving Father who has become reconciled through Christ; do good unto them as unto Thy children; bless their occupation, profession, and calling; avert from them every misfortune, and always be their Sun and Shield.

Having thus provided for them in all bodily things, show them Thy grace and goodness also in spiritual things. Let sinners be led to repentance by Thy goodness, in order that the angels of heaven may rejoice over them. Strengthen, stablish, and confirm in their good estate those who are in grace, that nothing may rob them of their crown and of that which they have committed to Thee. Gladden the hearts of all that are afflicted and sorrowful. Strengthen and heal the sick and the feeble. Comfort and refresh the forsaken. Have mercy on all men.

These, O Father of Mercies, are the supplica-

tions which I bring before Thee: graciously hear them and add to them Thy Yea and Amen. In this manner bless us, O God, our God, in whom we trust; yea, bless us in spiritual and temporal things, until in eternity we shall reap blessings without end from Thy hand and enter into the possession of the glories of Thy house. In confident trust that Thou wilt certainly hear this petition I close my eyes and say:—

Let our going in be blessed, Our departure in like measure:
Bless, O Lord, our toil and rest, Bless our bread, our grief and
pleasure; Be in death Thy blessing given, And make us blest
heirs of heaven. Amen.

THE NAME OF JESUS.

Jesus! Name of wondrous love,
Name all other names above!
Name at which must every knee
Bow in deep humility.

Jesus! Name of priceless worth
To the fallen sons of earth,
For the promise that it gave—
“Jesus shall His people save.”

Jesus! Name of mercy mild.
Given to the holy Child,
When the cup of human woe
First He tasted here below.

Jesus! Only name that's giv'n
Under all the mighty heav'n,
Whereby man, to sin enslaved,
Bursts his fetters and is saved.

Jesus! Name of wondrous love!
Human name of Him above!
Pleading only this, we flee,
Helpless, O our God, to Thee.

The Believing Christian, on Entering upon the Holy
Season of Lent, Meditates on the Suffering
of Jesus Christ.

MORNING PRAYER.

Jesus, I will ponder now On Thy holy passion;
With Thy Spirit me endow For such meditation.
Grant that I in love and faith May the image cherish
Of Thy suffering, pain, and death, That I might not
perish. Thus, O suffering Savior, I beseech Thee for
Thy gracious assistance, when in spirit I behold Thee
journeying to that city in which the sentence of death
already awaits Thee; and where the enemies who
hate Thee without cause rejoice at Thy coming.

This present season, which Thy infinite goodness
has again permitted me to reach, reminds me of the
bitter suffering to which Thou didst submit willingly
in accordance with the counsel of Thy heavenly
Father, in order that as the Lamb of God Thou
mightest take away the sins of the entire world, and
render satisfaction for them. No man can by any
means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom
for him; for the redemption of their souls is precious,
and it ceaseth forever. Therefore Thou didst take
pity on those whose flesh and blood Thou didst as-
sume in the fulness of time, and by Thy bloody
atonement Thou hast regained for them that peace
which by their sins they had not only broken, but
also lost.

Thou must by Thy power make me able to
ponder these important matters in a fruitful man-
ner, with profit to myself; for without Thee I can
do nothing. Therefore enlighten my understanding,
that in Thy light I may behold the greatness of Thy

love and compassion, and may be prompted to render to Thee the thanks due Thee. However, sanctify also my will, that I may accept, and apply for my benefit, the blessings which Thou hast acquired by Thy death. Thou didst love me before I knew Thee. Thou didst give Thyself for me at a time when I knew nothing of Thee. Thou didst suffer shame, scorn, ignominy, and manifold afflictions, in order to make me happy. All this Thou hast done for me, yea, for me, for my benefit. Ought I then not sing praises? Ought I not laud and magnify Thee on account of these sufferings? Aye, thousand, thousand thanks shall be, dearest Jesus, unto Thee. A thousand times, dearest Jesus, shall praise and glory be rendered unto Thee because Thou hast conquered hell and death.

I am now Thine own and Thou art my joy and my delight. Oh, that I might soon behold Thee, most beautiful Sun, in Thy glory, now that Thy suffering is ended! Oh, come to me, faithful Friend of my soul, and unite Thyself with me. Thou didst die for all, and hence also for me, in order that those who live might henceforth live, not unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again. Therefore, enter into my soul and give it life. Let me ever contemplate how much my redemption has cost Thee. Let me ever bear in mind that Thou hadst to endure the most shameful death, in order to deliver me from eternal death. Let the fact ever be before my eyes as a solemn reminder, that Thou hadst to lose Thy life because I had lived unto myself and unto the world; and let me also be moved thereby to live unto Thee and to follow Thee. Pluck me as a brand from the burning, in order that Thy

suffering may not have been rendered for me in vain.

Let me become Thy disciple, whom nothing shall be able to separate from Thee. To this end grant me Thy Spirit, that during this holy Lenten season He may bring home to me all that I hear and perceive of Thy bitter suffering and death. Give me grace to be ever occupied with Thee in these days, to find my delight in Thee, and thus to secure for myself a blessing that abides forever. If the world tries to tempt me to wantonness and ease, if Satan tries to disquiet and distract me by all manner of disturbance, if my corrupt flesh and blood draws me away and entices me to evil, let me think of Thy suffering, and with firm faith resist all these temptations, in order that they may not overcome and vanquish me. Help me to keep Thee in remembrance at all times, that I may thereby be kept from sin, and may finally enter into that glory to which Thou hast procured access for me by Thy suffering and death.

Lord, let Thy woes, Thy patience, My heart with strength inspire To vanquish all temptations, And spurn all low desire; This thought I fain would cherish most — What pain my soul's redemption Hath Thee, O Savior cost! Amen.

EXHORTATION.

God hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. *2 Cor. 5, 21.*

Among the early Christians the holy season of Lent was a season of devotion and prayer, and it was spent in special meditations upon the sufferings of Jesus. This custom is observed among Christians to this day. While Satan has induced the children of the world to enter upon the season of Lent, not with prayer and devotion, but with drunkenness, masquerades, gluttony, dissipation,

and wickedness, whereby they show that they care nothing for the crucified Lord Jesus, and trample His blood under foot, the children of God have a different spirit: they regard these things with horror.

(1) They begin this season with prayer and singing, thus preparing their hearts for the contemplation of the suffering of Jesus. (2) They place before their eyes the entire passion of Jesus: Jesus in Gethsemane, before the council of the Jews, before the judgment-seat of Pilate, upon Golgotha, and on the cross; and while contemplating each detail, they say: All this was done for me!

(3) While instituting these sacred meditations at home and at church, they do not rest satisfied with the mere history of these events, nor do they allow their devotion to vanish with the passing of Lent; but since they intend to draw comfort from the wounds of Jesus throughout the time of their life, and also in their dying hour, they remember the crucified and risen Jesus as long as they live. This remembrance (4) prompts them to crucify their lusts and desires, causing them to live no longer after the manner of the world, or to sin purposely, but to die unto sin, and to rise spiritually. God blesses such diligence, zeal, and desire for the sanctification of their lives.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, my Jesus, how great is Thy love, which Thou hast shown me by Thy bitter suffering! Thou art the only-begotten Son of God; Thou art the Lamb without spot, the Lord of Glory, the Most Holy, who did no sin; and behold, Thou dost surrender Thyself into the most shameful death and the most cruel suffering for me, an unrighteous person, a sinner, and a child of death. Oh, how great is Thy unspeakable mercy! The Holy One bears my unholiness, the Perfect One, my wickedness; the Just One, my unrighteousness; the Innocent One, my guilt. My sins are laid upon Thee, in order that Thy righteousness may be bestowed upon me. My Jesus, in Thy suffering I can see the wrath of God against sin, the abomination of sin,

the punishment of sin. For, if God on account of the iniquities of others and for imputed sins has on the Mount of Olives so miserably afflicted Thee, the innocent Lamb, and has suffered Thee to become so awfully disfigured by the treatment of Thy enemies, how grievously will those be punished in the end who are not moved to repentance and faith by this suffering, and who must finally make payment for their sins themselves!

My Jesus, I approach Thee now, and with a believing heart contemplate Thy suffering. Thou enterest the Garden of Gethsemane, and Thy sweat is great drops of blood. Ah! this is done for me, that I may be delivered from the power of Satan. Thou art brought before the judgment-seat, accused, and condemned to death: ah! this is done for me, that I may be acquitted, when after death I shall be placed before the judgment-seat on the last day. At Thy trial there are only accusers, but there is no advocate: ah! this is done for me, that Thou mayest be my Advocate, when my sins and my conscience accuse me. Thou art scourged, and Thy body is dyed with blood; the plowers draw their furrows deep upon Thy back: ah! this is done for me, that I may not be punished for my sins. Thou art led forth to death: ah! this is done for me, that my departure may be in peace, and may be my entrance into heaven, yea, my return to my Father. Thou art crucified: ah! this is done for me that through Thy death I might have life. Thou art buried: ah! this is done for me, that Thou mayest hallow my grave. Verily, this is love, this is mercy, that by Thy bitter suffering I may obtain life, grace, and the forgiveness of all my

sins. The chastisement of all my sins is upon Thee that I may have peace and be delivered from punishment.

I will now place this suffering before my eyes, and wherever I may be, it shall ever be my delight. Until body and soul are parted, Thy suffering and death shall ever be enshrined in my heart. Israelites were free from all guilt and punishment when in faith they brought a lamb for the sacrifice before God and beheld the shedding of its warm blood; so I, too, know that I have been pardoned and am reconciled with God, if I believe that Thou, O Jesus, the Lamb of God, without spot and without blemish, hast been slain for me, and hast poured out Thy heart's blood for me in abundance. Thy blood is the true sacrificial blood, the blood of reconciliation, the blood of purification, the blood of atonement.

O my Jesus, when my heart would mislead me into sins, I will remember the sufferings which Thou didst endure and the blood which Thou didst shed. When the world by its evil example would entice me to do as it is doing, I will place before my eyes Thy bleeding image on the Mount of Olives, at the scourging, and at the cross. In the terror of my sins I will flee into Thy wounds. When my conscience fills me with fear, I will take Thy blood as my ransom. Yea, in my dying hour I desire to know nothing but Thee, O Jesus. Thy holy name, O Jesus, shall be my last word; Thy bleeding form, my last thought; Thy last word on the cross shall also be my last sigh in death: with Thee I will say: Father, into Thy hand I commit my spirit. In that last hour, O Jesus, be Thou my Comfort, my Joy, my Consolation, my Defense. Amen.

HYMN.

Thou Rock of Ages cleft for me,
I haste to hide myself in Thee;
The heat, the coming storm I dread,
Oh, shelter my defenseless head.

'Tis done, I feel myself secure,
I know this Refuge will endure;
The heat may smite, the storm may rage,
And 'gainst my soul all foes engage.

I will not fear, but trust and sing,
And closer, closer to Thee cling,
Until I reach that world above,
The land of rest, the home of love,

And join the countless white-robed throng
To swell the loud triumphant song;
And ever hide myself in Thee,
Thou Rock of Ages, cleft for me.

O BLEEDING HEAD AND WOUNDED!

O bleeding Head, and wounded,
And full of pain and scorn,
In mockery surrounded
With cruel crown of thorn!
O Head! once crowned with glory
And heavenly majesty,
But now despised and gory;
Yet here I welcome Thee!

Men spit upon and jeer Thee,
Thou noble countenance,
Though mighty worlds shall fear Thee
And flee before Thy glance.
How art Thou pale with anguish,
With sore abuse and scorn!
How does Thy visage languish,
Which once was bright as morn!

Now from Thy cheeks has vanished
Their color once so fair;
From Thy red lips is banished
The splendor that was there.
Pale Death with cruel rigor
Bereavèth Thee of life;
Thus lovest Thou Thy vigor
And strength in this sad strife.

My burden, in Thy Passion,
Lord, Thou hast borne for me,
For it was my transgression
Which brought this woe on Thee,
I cast me down before Thee,
Wrath were my rightful lot,
Have mercy, I implore Thee,
Redeemer, spurn me not!

My Shepherd, now receive me!
My Guardian, own me Thine!
Great blessings Thou didst give me,
O Source of gifts divine!
Thy lips have often fed me
With milk and sweetest food;
Thy Spirit oft has led me
To stores of heavenly good.

Here I will stand beside Thee,
From Thee I will not part;
O Savior, do not chide me!
When breaks Thy loving heart,
When soul and body languish
In death's last fatal grasp,
Then, in Thy deepest anguish,
Thee in mine arms I'll clasp.

Naught ever so much blesses,
So much rejoices me,
As when in Thy distresses
I take a part with Thee.

Ah, well for me, if lying
Here at Thy feet, my Life,
I, too, with Thee were dying,
And thus might end my strife!

Thanks from my heart I offer
Thee, Jesus, dearest Friend.
For all that Thou didst suffer;
My good didst Thou intend.
Ah! grant that I may ever
To Thy truth faithful be;
When soul and body sever,
May I be found in Thee!

When hence I must betake me,
Lord, do not Thou depart!
O nevermore forsake me
When death is at my heart!
When soul and body languish,
O leave me not alone,
But take away mine anguish
By virtue of Thine own!

Be Thou my Consolation
And Shield when I must die;
Remind me of Thy Passion
When my last hour draws nigh.
Mine eyes shall then behold Thee,
Upon Thy cross shall dwell,
My heart by faith enfold Thee.
Who dieth thus, dies well.

EVENING PRAYER.

O my Jesus, my King and my Head, before
I lay my weary limbs to rest and fall asleep, I must
yet commune with Thee and commit myself to Thee.
The meditation which I have instituted to-day upon
Thy suffering has awakened in me the sweetest
emotions. With these in my heart let me quietly

fall asleep, and let the remembrance of Thee still bear fruit in me.

By Thy suffering, O dearest Jesus, Thou hast hallowed all the afflictions which may, and must, come to Thy members, and hence also to me. Thou wast sorrowful unto death; yea, Thou didst experience how a person feels when he is utterly forsaken. Thou didst undergo these sufferings, in order that whenever I am in like distress, I may be delivered from it by Thee. Therefore, O my Helper in need, be not cruel to me in such hours. When I cry, be not silent unto me. I am frightened when Thou seemest not to hear me. Trembling and anguish overwhelm me when Thou hidest Thyself and seemest not to know me and not to care for me. Terror and dismay seize me when in my temporal affliction or in my spiritual distress Thou seemest to turn me away, as though I had no right to speak before Thee. Therefore, O Thou Sun of Grace, do not hide Thyself from me. In such dark hours rouse my faith that I may firmly cling to Thy promises and to Thy love, and may confidently hope that Thou wilt turn my mourning into dancing, and wilt put off my sackcloth, and change my sadness into joy.

O yes, my Jesus, speak words of cheer to my soul in my affliction. Leave me not; do not withdraw Thy hand from me. Let me behold Thy fair likeness; let me consider that Thy suffering has had a glorious end; and let me firmly trust in Thy goodness and mercy. Let me also become like unto Thee in my suffering, and let me follow Thy example. Let me willingly submit to all that a wise and eternal Providence chooses to lay upon me. Let

me be patient when tribulations rush upon me like a flood. Let me bear with an even mind all that befalls me. Let the same mind be ever in me which was also in Thee, O Jesus. In my requests let me not prescribe to Thee the time and the hour when Thou art to help me; but let me ever say as Thou didst say: "Father, not my will, but Thine, be done." In my hours of sorrow let me so conduct myself, after Thy example, that at last I may with Thee enter into the joy everlasting. Let me remember Thee, and my sadness will soon vanish; for the remembrance of Thee, O Jesus, causes my saddened heart to rejoice. Hold Thy bleeding image ever before my eyes, and I shall never be without comfort, but shall be most powerfully refreshed and solaced with Thy vision.

Be with me also during this night; and when I awake to-morrow, and as often as I shall still rise from sleep, let me be satisfied with beholding Thee. Strengthen me continually with Thy hand until my end is come. And when it has arrived, when death knocks at my door, let me look forward trustingly to my transformation, and fall asleep in blessed peace. Receive my spirit in that hour; let Thy suffering be before my eyes; let me draw comfort, strength, and solace from it in abundant measure.

When hence I must betake me, Lord, do not Thou depart! O nevermore forsake me When death is at my heart! When soul and body languish, O leave me not alone, But take away mine anguish By virtue of Thine own! Amen.

The Believing Christian Ponders on the Day of Jesus' Death, or Good Friday.

EXHORTATION.

Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. *Is. 53, 4. 5.*

Good Friday is the real day of suffering of our blessed Jesus; on this day He died. It is true that even worldly people, from a sense of decency, or because they fear the opinion of their fellow-men, pass this day quietly. But Christians have chosen this day as a day of special devotion.

They ponder on this day the suffering of Jesus (1) as a suffering which Jesus took upon Him out of love. Oh, what a great love! O love incomparable, which prompted Thee, O Jesus, to enter upon this way of sorrows! Love impelled Jesus to become man; love moved Him to give Himself for us and to die on the cross. (2) Christians ponder the sufferings of Christ as innocent sufferings. We are not to think that the Savior had done the least thing deserving of punishment; for He was holy, undefiled, and separate from sinners. He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. Hence, on the part of Jesus it was wholly undeserved suffering; but He took it willingly upon Himself for our sakes. (3) His suffering was appointed for Him and sent to Him by His heavenly Father; for since Jesus suffered according to the determinate counsel of God, Acts 2, 23, He knew beforehand what awaited Him. This, however, does not free the Jews from guilt, as though they had been compelled to carry out the will of God. No; God would have been able without the aid of Jews completely to exhaust and slay His Son; for He had begun to do so in Gethsemane, when Christ lay prostrate on the ground and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood. For His own purpose God made use of the stubbornness and the malice of the Jews; their purpose was not to do the will of God, but to vent their ill will and spite against Christ. In a similar manner Joseph's brethren did not sell him in order to make him a great lord, but they meant to do evil to him; God, however, meant it for good. Gen. 50, 20. (4) The suffering of Christ was real suffering; for He keenly felt every wound and smarted under every pain.

The believer's soul considers all these things, and makes of them a mirror which reflects the anger of God against sin and the love of God for man's salvation.

PRAYER.

O loving and blessed Jesus, I come before Thee to meditate with true devotion of heart upon Thy bitter suffering. Lord, let Thy woes, Thy patience, My heart with strength inspire To vanquish all temptations And spurn all base desire. This thought I fain would cherish most—What pain my soul's redemption Hath Thee, O Savior, cost! O Lamb of God innocently slain! Thou didst suffer because all my sins, yea, the sins, debts, iniquities, unrighteousness, and wickedness of all men, had been laid upon Thee, and reckoned as Thine, so that in the judgment of God Thou wast regarded as the greatest sinner, yea, as sin itself. And as our sins had been cast upon Thee, Thou Lamb without spot, so our punishment, too, overwhelmed Thee like a flood. During Thy public ministry as a teacher contempt, vilification, and blasphemy were Thy lot; however, during Thy Passion all these things were poured upon Thee with redoubled force. Not satisfied with raising accusations against Thee and forcing Thee to stand trial in two courts, the spiritual and the secular, and suffering Thyself to be sentenced to death by both, Thou wast, in addition, made to suffer the cruelest physical pains, after the sentence of death had been pronounced against Thee. Thy holy body was wounded, scourged, torn, and suffused with blood.

Behold, O children of men, was there ever grief like the grief of our Jesus? His head was crowned with thorns, His body was covered with blood, being

bruised with the cutting thongs. On the cross, nails were driven through His hands and feet; His side was pierced with a spear, so that He could truthfully say: "I am a worm, and no man." However, not only was His holy body so miserably maltreated, but He had to suffer also the most extreme agony in His soul. His soul was sorrowful even unto death. The waves of God's wrath rushed upon Him, and the pains of hell took hold upon Him with such violence that He cried out upon the cross: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And then, at last, death followed.

O Lamb, slain by God, all this Thou hast suffered and endured for my good, for my benefit, for my comfort, for my peace, for my redemption, for my welfare, and for my salvation. For if Christ had not come into this world and assumed our miserable form, if He had not willingly died for our sins, we should have had to suffer eternal damnation. But now, if I believe on Thee and in the confidence of my faith make Thy holy blood my own, I shall not be condemned, but shall have eternal life through Thee.

O my Jesus, let Thy bitter suffering ever be before my eyes and in my heart, that I may draw comfort and obtain righteousness from it, and by it may be made a godly person. Let me not spend a day on which Thy bleeding image is not before my eyes. Let Thy suffering, Thy blood, Thy wounds, be written upon my hands, yea, into my heart, in order that with each breath nothing but Jesus' Passion, Jesus' death, Jesus' blood, may be in my thoughts, and I may thereby be weaned from the world, sanctified, washed, and purified.

My Jesus, as Thy suffering raises me up, gladdens, comforts, awakens, and edifies me, so do also the seven words which Thou didst speak upon the cross. Alas! it was also for me that Thou didst pray, "Forgive them!" Forgive my soul whatever it has done against Thee! For me Thou didst cry: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" in order that I might never be forsaken, not in the hour of death, not in my crosses, not in my afflictions, not at the Judgment on the last day, neither here in time nor yonder in eternity. For me Thou didst say, "I thirst." Grant that in turn I may embrace Thee by faith, may thirst after Thee and pant after Thee as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, and may be delighted and refreshed with Thy love. For me Thou wast concerned when Thou saidst to John: "Behold Thy mother!" Although I may stand like Mary beneath the cross, forsaken by all men in my tribulation, Thou wilt cordially receive me, wilt have mercy upon me, take care of me, help me, and be gracious unto me. Oh, let me hear in my dying hour Thy voice saying, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Give me this assurance in the days of my health, repeat it to me on my deathbed, and after I have departed, let it be fulfilled in me. For me Thou didst say, "It is finished!" Everything has now been done that I ought to have done; everything has now been suffered that I ought to have suffered. Salvation, life, peace, joy, comfort, bliss, the crown of life, and white garments have been procured for me. Yea, Thy last word upon the cross shall become a word of comfort and cheer also when I die: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." Thus will I pray, repeating the words after Thee.

When time seems short and death is near, And I am pressed
by doubt and fear, And sins, an overflowing tide, Assail my peace
on every side, This thought my refuge still shall be: I know the
Savior died for me. His name is Jesus, and He died, For guilty
sinners crucified; Content to die that He might win Their ransom
from the death of sin. No sinner worse than I can be, Therefore
I know He died for me. If grace were bought, I could not buy;
If grace were coined, no wealth have I; By grace alone I draw
my breath, Held up from everlasting death; Yet since I know
His grace is free, I know the Savior died for me. Amen.

HYMN.

Beloved Jesus, what law hast Thou broken
That such sharp sentence should on Thee be spoken?
Of what great crime hast Thou to make confession,
Of what transgression?

They crown Thy head with thorns, they smite, they scourge
Thee,
With cruel mockings to the cross they urge Thee,
They give Thee gall to drink, they still decry Thee,
They crucify Thee.

Whence come these sorrows, whence this mortal anguish?
It is my sins for which Thou, Lord, must languish;
Yea, all the wrath, the woe Thou dost inherit,
'Tis I do merit.

What strangest punishment is suffered yonder?
The Shepherd dies for sheep that love to wander,
The Master pays the debt His servants owe Him,
Who would not own Him.

The sinless Son of God must die in sadness;
The sinful child of man may live in gladness;
Man forfeited His life, and is acquitted —
God is committed.

There was no spot in me by sin untainted,
Sick with sin's poison all my heart had fainted;
My heavy guilt to hell had well-nigh brought me,
Such woe it wrought me.

O wondrous love, whose depth no heart hath sounded,
That brought Thee here by foes and thieves surrounded!
All worldly pleasures, heedless, I was trying
While Thou wert dying!

O mighty King, no time can dim Thy glory!
How shall I spread abroad Thy wondrous story?
How shall I find some worthy gifts to proffer?
What dare I offer?

For vainly doth our human wisdom ponder
Thy woes, Thy mercy still transcends our wonder.
Oh, how should I do aught that could delight Thee!
Can I requite Thee?

Yet unrequited, Lord, I would not leave Thee;
I will renounce whate'er doth vex or grieve Thee,
And quench with thoughts of Thee and prayers most lowly
All fires unholy.

But since my own strength never will suffice me
To crucify desires that still entice me,
To all good deeds, oh, let Thy Spirit win me,
And reign within me!

I'll think upon Thy mercy without ceasing,
That earth's vain joys to me no more be pleasing;
To do Thy will shall be my sole endeavor
Henceforth forever.

Whate'er of earthly good this life may grant me
I'll risk for Thee; no shame, no cross shall daunt me;
I shall not fear what man can do to harm me,
Nor death alarm me.

But worthless is my sacrifice, I own it;
Yet, Lord, for love's sake Thou wilt not disown it;
Thou wilt accept my gift in Thy great meekness,
Nor shame my weakness.

And when, dear Lord, before Thy throne in heaven,
To me the crown of joy at last is given,
Where sweetest hymns Thy saints forever raise Thee,
I, too, shall praise Thee.

The Believing Christian Rejoices Over the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

MORNING PRAYER.

O my Jesus, as I now open my eyes and look into the bright day, I seem to begin life anew after having lain in death, as it were, during the peaceful slumber which was vouchsafed me in Thy arms during the night. Yea, now I begin really to live, since Thou livest and art risen from the dead. By Thy resurrection Thou hast procured for me this happiness, that in Thee I may have life and may have it more abundantly. Let me truly realize the happiness which I derive from Thy return to life! Let the noble life that is in Thee be gloriously manifested and break forth in me, in order that not only I myself may experience it, but others, too, may see and observe it in me. If in the realm of nature it can plainly be seen when the sap and the new life is rising in the trees, how much more must it be manifest in the realm of grace when Thy holy life has entered into the soul. Therefore, since by Thy resurrection I have also become a partaker of Thy life, let me reveal it in Thy strength and show it before the whole world.

Let me manifest this life toward God, by diligently keeping Him in my thoughts, by making Him attend my going out and my coming in, by beginning and accomplishing all things with Him. Accordingly, let me not be ashamed to speak of Him, to laud Him everywhere as my best and truest Friend, and to praise His goodness in every place. Guard me, however, that I may not do these things from a false motive and from vainglory, but from

sincere love of Him and for the glory of His holy name.

Let Thy life, furthermore, be manifest in me toward my neighbor, that I may be concerned for him, may converse with him on the condition of his soul, may with him take delight in Thee, and may consecrate my time to Thee, and never spend it in vain conversation and sinful amusements. When I speak of Thee to other persons, let it always be done with profoundest reverence, and let the thought never enter into my mind that by speaking of Thee I seek to display my wisdom rather than to increase Thy honor.

Finally, let Thy life in me be manifest in those duties which I must observe toward myself. Let me gladly be in Thy company and commune with Thee; let me ever rejoice in Thee, and let me never tire of striving to form a closer acquaintance with Thee and to enter into more intimate relation with Thee. In this manner make me happy here in time and hereafter in eternity. I am under the strongest obligation to make this the object of my most zealous concern. Help me, Thou risen Savior, that I may keep what I have and that no one may take from me my crown which I possess even now in believing hope. Let me never and in no manner forsake Thee. Let neither height nor depth, neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities nor powers, neither things present nor things to come, nor any other creature separate me from Thy love, from Thy fellowship, from union with Thee.

Let me not only esteem very highly and prize above all else the gifts of grace which Thou communicatest and bestowest upon me while I am in Thee,

but let me also employ them properly, that I may reap the sweetest fruits from them. Then, when my heart is aglow with Thy love, when my knowledge is growing and increasing, let me constantly persevere in such growth, and let me also labor without tiring to convert others from the error of their way and to save their souls from death.

If Thou, O my Savior, as I confidently trust because of Thy goodness, wilt give me this grace for which I ask, namely, that I may live in Thee and may by my conversation everywhere manifest and reveal the life which I have obtained, then let me not fall again into sleep and death, but let me daily rise again, continue to walk in a new life, and bring forth good fruits until at the appointed time Thou wilt lead me into the life everlasting.

Grant that we and all Christians may Partake of this great joy to-day Which by Thy resurrection Thou To all men freely givest now. Grant us that we may rise from sin, A holy life to lead begin, Till we, from sin and pain set free, In endless Easter live with Thee. Amen.

EXHORTATION.

I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of death and hell.

Rev. 1, 18.

Holy Eastertide is a time of joy for all the children of God; for they rejoice from their heart in their risen Jesus. They rejoice, (1) because their redemption is completed. For, after Jesus, who had offered Himself as our Surety to make satisfaction for us, is risen from the dead, a complete ransom has been paid for us; God is reconciled; He has accepted the death of His Son in the place of our death, and has granted us life for His sake. Believing souls rejoice (2) over the glorious witnesses and testimonies of the resurrection of their Jesus. Is it not a glorious testimony to be told that He was seen ten times after His resurrection; that on

one occasion He appeared to five hundred brethren, 1 Cor. 15, 5; that He spoke with individual disciples, ate with them, Acts 10, 41; and permitted them to touch and handle Him, John 20, 25; 1 John 1, 1? All these testimonies remove at once all cause for unbelief. Yea, unbelief is still conquered by every believer, because, according to Gal. 2, 20, Jesus lives in us; hence He must have risen and be alive. They rejoice, (3) because they have received the seal and assurance of the gracious forgiveness of their sins, of their peace with God, and know that as believers in Christ they may fearlessly approach God, and that He, in turn, will come to them. (4) They are assured that the resurrection of Jesus will comfort them also in their dying hour. By His death Jesus has sweetened death for them and hallowed their graves, assuring them that they will rise to life everlasting.

(5) Accordingly, they spend holy Eastertide, like other festivals, in heartfelt devotion, prayer, praise, and contemplation of the blessings of God. They endeavor to rise spiritually every day, and to quit the grave of their sins, that is, their evil habits, naughtiness, and iniquities. On the other hand, they strive to spend the remainder of their lives in faith and holiness to the glory of the Lord.

PRAYER.

The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous; the right hand of the Lord is exalted, the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. O risen Jesus, mighty Victor, Jesus Christ, Conqueror of death, powerful Samson, Thy resurrection fills my heart with pure joy, now that by Thy grace I may celebrate this holy festival. On bended knees and with folded hands I say: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" "Jesus is risen from the dead!" this is a joyful message. Our Surety has been released from the prison of the grave; therefore sin must have been canceled, God reconciled, and our debt paid. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen

again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Jesus has abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light.

O Jesus, dearèst Friend, Thy resurrection brings me a threefold comfort. I say on this festival: The resurrection of Jesus is my victory. Now my sins can no more condemn me; for by the blood and the wounds of Christ, by His resurrection, I have obtained forgiveness of all my sins, no matter how many or how great and grievous they are. Here is an all-sufficient ransom, a perfect redemption. In Christ we have the redemption through His blood, namely, the forgiveness of sins. Death cannot harm me, because Christ has overcome death, and has changed my death into a sweet sleep, yea, hath made it my departure to my Father in heaven. Satan is a vanquished foe; he may roar, but he cannot devour me; he may accuse me, but Jesus intercedes for me, and bestows upon me His righteousness, in which I am justified in the sight of God, and saved. Hell does not terrify me; for Christ has rescued me from hell. He that believeth on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. O glad day, on which my salvation is sealed and my happiness confirmed to me! Jesus lives, and I shall also live, united with Him in faith, and hereafter in everlasting glory.

Rejoicing in the risen Redeemer, my soul says furthermore: The resurrection of Jesus is my own resurrection. Since the Head is risen, the members cannot remain in death. However, on the last day I shall not simply rise like other men, but I shall rise as a child of God, as a joint-heir with Christ,

by virtue of His merit and atonement. Therefore, I fear not the grave; I regard it as a chamber of rest, in which my Savior will let me sleep until He will say: Arise, ye dead, and appear before the judgment-seat. Oh, the greatness of the glory which my Savior has gained for me! Risen Jesus, how can I sufficiently publish, glorify, and praise Thy grace and mercy? Oh, the love which bestows life and salvation on me! Now all the injury caused by the fall of Adam has been repaired.

And oh, my Savior, Thy resurrection is to yield me a very strong comfort also in my sufferings. Thou didst lie locked in the tomb, but Thou camest forth gloriously. Thus the night of my affliction, too, will pass, and the sun of Thy joy, grace, help, and refreshing will rise for me again. O Jesus, only three days didst Thou remain in the grave. Thus, after my tribulation the day of deliverance is appointed also for me. After the weary years of suffering the gladsome year of jubilee will follow. Thou didst rise with a glorified body. Thy wounds and nail-prints were no longer bloody, nor did they smart; but they were radiant like the sun. Thus my body, too, will be transformed and glorified, when Thou wilt quicken my dust. I shall have my former body restored to me; I shall be clothed with my former flesh. This body with its members, which were consecrated to Thy service, shall also share the splendor of heaven and be glorified. Yea, since Thou, O Jesus, livest, I have in Thee a faithful and constant Friend, who will provide for me while I live, sustain me while I suffer, protect me from my enemies, gladden me in affliction, refresh me in my dying hour, keep me when I am in the grave,

and finally receive me into glory, and adorn me with the crown of life, which has been promised also to me.

He triumphs, lo! the Son of God! To-day He left His dark abode. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! In light and majesty arrayed. To Him let endless thanks be paid. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hell's dread dominion He hath crushed And Satan's monstrous menace hushed. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Oh, valiantly hath He prevailed And Victor evermore is hailed. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! His captive foes no more can harm; No more their sullen threats alarm. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Their chieftain in the dust is trod, And we are made the sons of God. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Lord Jesus Christ, Thou Savior dear, Thou Friend of sinners ever near, — Hallelujah! Hallelujah! — In tender mercy be our guide Till we with Thee are glorified. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Our heart and tongues in praise conspire; Our souls turn heav'nward with desire. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! O help us, Lord, when all things end; So shall Thy sounding praise ascend. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Now to the Father on the throne Together with His only Son, — Hallelujah! Hallelujah! — And Holy Ghost coequally, Be praise throughout eternity. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Amen.

HYMN.

Awake, my heart, with gladness,
See what to-day is done!
How after gloom and sadness
Comes forth the glorious Sun!
My Savior there was laid
Where our bed must be made
When to the realms of light
Our spirit wings its flight.
They in the grave did sink Him,
The Foe held jubilee;
Before he can bethink him,
Lo! Christ again is free,
And "Victory!" He cries,
And waveth toward the skies
His banner, for the field
Is by the Hero held.

Upon the grave is standing
The Hero, looking round;
The Foe, no more withstanding,
His weapons on the ground
Throws down, His hellish power
To Christ he must give o'er,
And to the Victor's bands
Must yield his feet and hands.

This is a sight that gladdens
And fills my heart with glee;
Now, naughtsoever saddens
My soul, nor takes from me
My trust or fortitude,
Or any precious good
Which by His victory
My Savior gained for me.

Hell and its prince, the Devil,
Now of their power are shorn;
I now am safe from evil,
And sin I laugh to scorn;
Grim Death with all his might
Cannot my soul affright;
He is a powerless form,
Howe'er he rage and storm.

The world against me rageth,
Its fury I disdain;
Though bitter war it wageth,
Its work is all in vain.
No trouble troubles me,
My heart from care is free,
Misfortune now is play,
And night is bright as day.

I cleave now and forever,
To Christ, a member true;
My Head will leave me never,
Whate'er He passeth through;

He treads the world beneath
His feet, and conquers death
And hell, and breaks sin's thrall —
I'm with Him through it all.

To glory He ascendeth,
I follow Him fore'er,
For Christ, my Head, defendeth
His member from all care:
No enemy I fear
Because my Head is near;
My Savior is my Shield,
By Him all rage is stilled.

He brings me to the portal
That opens into bliss,
Where graved in words immortal
This golden scripture is:
"Who there are scorned with Me
Here with Me crowned shall be;
Who there with Me shall die
Shall here be raised as I."

EVENING PRAYER.

O living Savior, Lord Jesus Christ! Abide with me; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. Thou hast shown me Thy bountiful grace; for Thou hast not only granted me health, so that I have once more been able to celebrate Thy triumphant resurrection from the dead (for which mercy I owe Thee thanks without end); but from the fact that Thou hast assumed life again Thou hast enriched me with abundant comfort, which Thou hast caused to be proclaimed to me. Do not let the manifestations of Thy love depart from me. Abide with me in Thy grace, and hear my prayer with which I come before Thee before I fall asleep.

At the first glimpse of this day when I remembered Thy blessed resurrection, I called upon Thee fervently that Thou wouldst manifest Thy life in me every way. Call unto me with a strong voice: Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and I will give thee light. Let me hear this voice and heed it; and give me Thy light. Cause me to rise spiritually, that I may not remain dead in my sins. I cannot accomplish this by my own strength; for, although I read diligently such books as might edify me, though I listen zealously to others who show and point me the way, yet I cannot achieve this result, that I become a new man and live in Thee. This is Thy work alone. Thou must accomplish it; Thou must work in me both to will and to do. Therefore let Thy grace in me be efficient and awaken me from the sleep of sin.

Give more light to my intellect that I may know Thee and the ways in which I must go. Grant unto my will a greater ability to do that which is pleasing to Thee. Implant in my heart a better and more sincere intention in all that I engage to do, in order that I may enter upon it only for Thy glory and honor. Endow the faculties of my mind with willing obedience, to be governed by Thee and to be minded as Thou wast. O my Savior, if Thou wilt do this, I shall rise from sleep and show that I am become a new man.

After Thy blessed resurrection not only Thy holy body was glorified, but from the moment in which Thou didst quit Thy grave Thou didst adopt a conversation and a mode of life altogether different from the one which Thou hadst adopted be-

fore Thy death. Therefore let me, when rising spiritually with Thee, truly experience and perceive this spiritual resurrection, and the new life which I have obtained. Let others also notice and perceive it in me, in order that everybody may see by my godly conversation, by my blameless walk, by my holy and God-pleasing works, that I am no longer darkness, but light in the Lord; that I have been called, and by this call have been translated out of darkness into Thy marvelous light. Henceforth let me renounce all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and, on the other hand, let me live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present world. Let me quit the world and live only for Thee, in order that Thou mayest at all times live in me and walk in me. Keep my eyes constantly open, that they may be always wakeful, and I may not lose my new spiritual life, but may pass from glory to glory, from knowledge to knowledge, till at last I shall be united and live with Thee forevermore.

Lord, Jesus Christ, strong Hero Thou, Grim death Thou hast o'erpowered now, Thou dost destroy hell's gate and chain. Dost on the third day rise again. Thou grantest to Thy friends the grace To look again upon Thy face, And showest them the glorious prize, Won when from death Thou didst arise. Grant that we and all Christians may Partake of this great joy to-day Which by Thy resurrection Thou To all men freely givest now. Grant us that we may rise from sin, A holy life to lead begin, Till we, from sin and pain set free, In endless Easter live with Thee. Amen.

The Believing Christian Meditates upon the Ascension of Christ.

AN EVENING PRAYER FOR ASCENSION.

Suggested by the promise of the ascending Lord: "Lo, I am with you alway!"

As low the light of day descends,
And fall the shadows wide;
As now, O Lord, the journey ends,
With me, I pray, abide!

The path together we have walked
Throughout the sunny day,
And Thou of heavenly things hast talked;
Abide Thou here, I pray!

My heart hath burned, as yonder burn
The stars within the sky;
And still, O Lord, my soul doth yearn
To have Thy presence nigh!

A plenteous board I cannot spread
Before Thee as my Guest;
But in the breaking of the bread
I shall myself be blest!

This very eve come with me sup,
Whate'er may be the fare;
And in the lifting of the cup
I shall a blessing share!

Abide with me through all the night,
And converse with me hold,
Until the sun the eastern height
Shall climb in robes of gold!

Yea, gracious Master, e'er abide
With me and be my Friend!
I wish no other friend beside
With whom my life to blend.

Thou hast a charm of voice and speech
That thrills me to the core.
Hear Thou my prayer, I now beseech,
Abide till life be o'er!

MORNING PRAYER.

Eternal High Priest, glorified Jesus, Thou art holy, undefiled, and separate from all sinners. After Thou hadst made atonement, Thou didst ascend on high, yea, above the heavens, and didst prepare for Thy redeemed the place to which they shall come, when they have finished their course and have kept the faith. Thou intercedest for them, and wilt finally gather them about Thee, in order that they may in all eternity be where Thou art. I am also one of those which Thou hast purchased and redeemed with Thy precious blood; for Thy blood which flowed from Thy riven side was shed for all men. Oh, how I rejoice over Thy triumphant ascension, because by the same Thou art making a way for me and art directing me to the place to which I shall go when I shall depart this life as Thy servant! How delighted I am this moment when I awake and in spirit hear the angelic hosts of heaven singing in joyful chorus: Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth! This serves me as an illustration, showing how I shall join those perfect spirits in singing hymns of praise and gratitude to Thy honor throughout eternity, when by a blessed death I shall at last enter yonder realm of joy to which Thou hast made a way for me by Thy ascension to Thy Father and my Father, to Thy God and my God.

However, O Prince of Life, since Thy ascension cannot be of any benefit to me if I remain lying in the dungeon of my sins; since the victory Thou hast gained over sin, death, and hell can profit me nothing if I do not myself fight against these enemies of my soul; since I cannot attain to Thy

heavenly glory into which Thou didst enter by ascending on high, if I do not become heavenly-minded: therefore, O dearest Redeemer, grant me strength by Thy grace that I, too, may enter upon a new spiritual life and become heavenly-minded. To this end kindle in me a heartfelt desire truly to know the treasures of Thy grace which Thou hast procured for me by Thy suffering and death, by Thy ascension, and by Thy sitting at the right hand of Thy Father. I find these treasures described in the revealed Word of God; grant that this Word may urge me to love Thee fervently and to prefer Thee above all else. And when I shall have learned to know the glory, the righteousness, the peace, and the grace which Thou hast acquired for me, let me zealously strive to enter into true and intimate fellowship with Thee. Let this be accomplished by a living faith, which places me within Thy wounds and Thee within my heart, and which unites me with Thee so closely that I live in Thee and Thou in me. Let this be accomplished also by my continuous communion with Thee, by my persevering and my continuous prayer, and by my untiring remembrance of Thee, my heart thus being always where my treasure is.

Preserve me, lest I permit myself to be drawn away from this heavenly disposition by the lust of the world. Keep me from coveting earthly things which burden my mind, and draw me to the earth with their powerful weight, thus rendering me unfit for ascending to heaven. Accordingly, let me always direct my heart to that place where I long to be forever; and let me wish to die only from a desire to be with Thee. Lead me thus by Thy

side, as long as I must, according to Thy counsel, continue in this vale of tears. And when at last my eyes shall close, and I shall yield my spirit into Thy hands, take me unto Thyself in heaven.

How beautiful, how lovely, how glorious, how peaceful I shall be when I am with Thee! Even now I rejoice when I think of what I shall be. I confidently hope to be with Thee forever. Let not my hope be put to shame, but grant me my desire, and let me persevere and remain constant in this blessed state of grace, so that when I die, I may behold Thy face, and when I awake again, I may be satisfied with Thy likeness, and then may nevermore be removed from Thy side.

From Thy ascension let such grace, Dear Lord, be ever found in me That steadfast faith may guide my ways With step unfaltering up to Thee, And at Thy voice I may depart With joy to dwell where Thou, Lord, art. Lord, hear my supplication!

When on our vision dawning Will break the wished-for hour Of that all-glorious morning When Christ shall come with power? O come, thou welcome day! When we, our Savior meeting, His second advent greeting, Shall hail the heaven-sent ray. Amen. Yea, let it be so. Amen.

EXHORTATION.

I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God. *John 20, 17.*

The contemplation of the ascension of Jesus, our Savior, cannot fail to be comforting and edifying to the believing soul. (1) It reminds the believer of the certainty of his redemption. Since the Victor returns to the place whence He came, to heaven, He has finished the work which He was sent to do. When He was conceived and born, He came forth from the Father, and in His ascension He returns to the Father, having acquired for the children of men peace, joy, forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and salvation.

(2) The ascension of Christ reminds a believing soul of the fact that we have here no continuing city, but that we must seek one to come. Neither the godly nor the ungodly have a permanent dwelling-place on earth. The godly do not desire such a habitation, because they know of a better one; and the ungodly, though they desire it, do not obtain it. For it is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the Judgment. Now, then, since there is no permanent dwelling-place for men here on earth, the godly direct their hearts to that place where they wish to be forever. (3) Yea, they are reminded every day, when looking at their homes, their garments, their possessions, and their relatives, that they must leave all these things behind them.

(4) In order that their place of glory may be found prepared for them when the hour of their deliverance from the misery of this life is come, they are diligent to ascend to heaven in a spiritual manner. Earth is cast out of their thoughts; they are mindful of heaven; the world is denied a share of their love; they cling to Jesus by faith. The world is not permitted to determine their life; they live not according to the will and the customs of the world, but according to the will of God. (5) Hence, whenever they lift their eyes heavenward, they say to themselves: Yonder is my fatherland, my heritage, and my eternal home.

PRAYER.

God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of the trumpet. Sing praises unto God; sing praises unto our King!—thus, O my Jesus, Thou mighty Victor, I celebrate Thy ascension, by which Thou hast entered into Thy glory, having finished the work of redeeming the human race. Now all our enemies, the devil, the world, sin, and death, lie prostrate beneath Thy feet. Thou hast delivered us from them. Having effected the cleansing of our sins by Thyself, Thou didst sit down at the right hand of the divine Majesty in heaven.

O my Jesus, all this is a very great comfort to me, and I rejoice over it from my inmost soul. As

I rejoiced at Thy coming to earth, so I take comfort in Thy ascension. Thou sittest at the right hand of God and intercedest for us; hence, when I pray, I am not praying alone; Thy Spirit prays in me, and Thou prayest for me. Thus my poor, feeble prayer will be graciously heard for Thy sake.

I rejoice when I remember Thy words: "I go to prepare a place for you, that, where I am, there ye may be also." This promise refreshes my spirit, because I know that Thou hast prepared a place for me, and when I die, I shall find a place where I shall abide and remain forever. Thou hast been crowned with glory and honor, and hast laid up for me the beautiful crown of righteousness, which Thou, the righteous Judge, wilt give to all them that love Thy appearing. Thou hast taken possession of Thy kingdom, and rulest over heaven and earth, in the realm of nature, of grace, and of glory. And the day will come when Thou wilt say to me and all believers: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

According to Thy human nature Thou hast received gifts for men that Thou mightest distribute them to us, Thy brethren, who believe in Thee. O my Jesus, grant me a twofold portion; for I need twofold strength and twofold comfort. Grant me Thy Holy Spirit; give me godliness, chastity, meekness, humility. Grant me Thy righteousness, sonship with God, life, peace, and, finally, heaven's glory and everlasting salvation. Now that Thou, my Head, art exalted, Thou wilt draw me, Thy member, after Thee. Since Thy Spirit gives me

life, I shall be with Thee in eternity. What comfort, what joy, what glory this is which my Savior promises to His believers, His disciples, saying, "Where I am, there shall also My servant be"! O my Jesus, let me be where Thou art; draw me after Thee, to the place where Thou art, exalted, at the right hand of God. Bring me into the company of the holy angels and all the elect. Let me behold Thy glory, which Thou hast prepared for Thy believers.

Although, dearest Friend of my soul, by ascending on high Thou hast withdrawn from me Thy visible presence, still Thou art with me invisibly by virtue of Thy promise: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Therefore I am everywhere content; I know that Thou art with me in the hour of need; Thou deliverest me from danger; Thou refreshest me in suffering; Thou comfortest me in affliction; Thou protectest me in all adversities. Therefore I am of good courage; the Lord Jesus is on my side; I will not fear, what can man do unto me? Though I do not see Thee, yet I love Thee and rejoice in Thee with joy unspeakable. I shall see Thee when my soul after its blessed departure from the body shall ascend to heaven. I shall also see Thee with mine eyes on the last day, when I shall rise from the dead.

To this end I shall daily institute an ascension to heaven and shall contemplate with the eyes of faith my future home, my future crown, my abiding-place, my robe of white. As long as I am in the world, I will shut out the world from my heart, from my love, from my life. I will flee the world with all its vanities, habits, and sins because

these hinder me from ascending to heaven in this spiritual manner. Thus, while I live, I live unto the Lord, and when I die, I die in the Lord.

And so I stretch mine arms to Thee, And gladly hence betake me; Peaceful and calm my sleep shall be, No human voice can wake me. But Christ is with me through the strife, And He will bear me into life, And open heav'n before me. Amen.

HYMN.

Yes, there remaineth yet a rest!
 Arise, sad heart, that darkly pines,
 By heavy care and pain opprest,
 On whom no sun of gladness shines;
 Look to the Lamb! in yon bright fields
 Thou'lt know the joy His presence yields;
 Cast off thy load and thither haste;
 Soon shalt thou fight and bleed no more,
 Soon, soon thy weary course be o'er,
 And deep the rest thou then shalt taste.

The rest appointed thee of God,
 The rest that naught shall break or move,
 That ere this earth by man was trod
 Was set apart for thee by love.
 Our Savior gave His life to win
 This rest for thee; O enter in!
 Hear how His voice sounds far and wide:
 Ye weary souls, no more delay,
 Loiter not faithless by the way;
 Here in My peace and rest abide.

Ye heavy-laden, come to Him.
 Ye who are bent with many a load,
 Come from your prisons drear and dim,
 Toil thus not sadly on your road.
 Ye've borne the burden of the day,
 And hear ye not the Savior say:
 "I am your Refuge and your Rest"?
 His children ye, of heavenly birth,
 Howe'er may rage sin, hell, or earth,
 Here ye are safe, here calmly blest.

Oh, what contentment fills the breast
Of wanderers through the desert plains,
If they have found a place to rest,
To quench their thirst and cure their pains!
How welcome is a humble bed,
Where they may rest their weary head,
To persons that are sick and sore!
Such hours of sweet repose soon fly,
But there remains a rest on high
Where we shall rest forevermore.

Yonder in joy the sheaves we bring,
Whose seed was sown on earth in tears;
There in our Father's house we sing
The song too sweet for mortal ears.
Sorrow and sighing all are past
And pain and death are fled at last;
There with the Lamb of God we dwell,
He leads us to the crystal river,
He wipes away all tears forever;
What there is ours no tongue can tell.

Nor thirst nor hunger pains us there,
The time of recompense is come,
Nor cold nor scorching heat we bear,
We're sheltered in our Savior's home.
The Lamb is in the midst; and those
Who follow Him through shame and woes,
Are crowned with honor, joy, and peace.
The dry bones gather life again,
One Sabbath over all shall reign,
Wherein all toil and labor cease.

There is untroubled calm and light,
No gnawing care shall mar our rest.
Ye weary, heed this word aright,
Come, lean upon your Savior's breast.
Fain would I linger here no more,
Fain to yon happier world upsoar,
And join that bright expectant band.
O raise, my soul, the joyful song
That rings through yon triumphant throng;
Thy perfect rest is nigh at hand.

EVENING PRAYER.

Living and exalted Savior! Thou hast ascended on high and hast sat down, also according to Thy human nature, at the right hand of the majesty of God. By this act, a's also by Thy blessed incarnation, Thou hast ennobled my nature, and hast acquired for me a title in heaven. Praise, glory and thanks be unto Thee for this grace!

But I pray Thee to let the purpose of Thy ascension be accomplished in me. Thy purpose is that where Thou art all believers are to be with Thee forever, and that they are to be one with Thee as Thou art one with the Father. Oh, how my spirit is filled with joy when I think of these matters! Let me not experience this joy in vain, but let me arrive at the full fruition of it in eternity. O merciful Lord, let me even in my present life attain to the blessedness of being one with Thee. Let me as a member be attached to Thee, my Head; and let me nevermore be severed from Thee. Let me obtain in Thee power, strength, and increase in all good works, in order that I may be able to remain with Thee in eternity.

To this end let me henceforth be one with Thee and all Thy believers as regards the glorious treasures which Thou hast acquired for us by Thy suffering and death. Let me, together with my fellow-Christians, become partaker of these treasures, and thereby obtain as my own Thy peace, the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, access to the throne of grace, and the assurance of life everlasting.

Let me be one with Thee and all believers in spirit; let Thy Spirit, not the spirit of the world, guide, enlighten, sanctify, govern, glorify, and unite

me with Thee. Let me by this Spirit be in Thee and with Thee; yea, let me be Thine own, even as Thou art united with the Father in one Spirit and life. Let me be one with all believers in love, that I may cherish them with a sincere and constant love, and may wish, do, and procure for them whatsoever I may wish for myself. Let my love toward them be fervent, zealous, and constant.

True love is the bond of perfectness, which holds together all the virtues that are becoming to Christians, and causes them to be exercised. As Thou art united with Thy Father in unspeakable love, so let me be one with Thee and Him. Let me heartily love Thee, and Him who sent Thee; and to this end let me consecrate to Thee and Him my will, my intellect, my affections, and my entire life. O my exalted Savior, if I obtain this grace from Thee, I shall be truly happy, truly blessed during my pilgrimage on earth and after my pilgrimage shall have been ended. When I have attained to unity with Thee by Thy Spirit, Thou art mine and I am Thine; I can at all times derive a sure comfort from Thy assistance, Thy graciousness, Thy love, Thy blessing. I can always put my trust in Thee; I need fear no trouble; I may hope for every good thing from Thee. Is this not an enviable blessedness which I obtain through Thee and in Thee?

However, this blessedness does not cease when I cease to live, but in that event it rises to a higher stage and reaches greater perfection. When resting in Thy arms, in which Thou constantly holdest me as Thy own, Thou wilt glorify and receive my spirit with Thee into glory when I shall have closed my eyes and yielded up my spirit. For, could the

Head rise and leave His members dead? Thou wilt unite me with Thee forever, and let me taste joy, rapture, and pleasures at Thy side forevermore. Thou wilt grant me to occupy the place which Thou hast prepared for me by Thy death and by ascending into the kingdom of Thy Father, and Thou wilt lead me into the everlasting habitations of peace. Oh, what blessedness, therefore, is in store for me when I shall have become one with Thee as Thou art with the Father! What happiness awaits me yonder, when I shall have entered fully into Thy fellowship! I rejoice even now at the thought of this great glory. Let my rejoicing be not in vain. Let me while I am here have a foretaste of heaven; in yonder eternal home, however, let me, together with all believers, be fully united with Thee, with Thy Father, and with the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Yea, before I fall asleep, assure me by Thy Spirit that my prayer has certainly been heard. Let it not have come before Thee in vain, in order that I may henceforth become, and forever remain, one with Thee.

Draw us to Thee, For then shall we Walk in Thy steps forever, And hasten on Where Thou art gone, To be with Thee, dear Savior. Draw us to Thee, Lord, lovingly; Let us depart with gladness, That we may be Forever free From sorrow, grief, and sadness. Draw us to Thee, O grant that we May find the road to heaven; Direct our way, Lest we should stray, And from Thy path be driven. Draw us to Thee, That also we Thy heavenly bliss inherit, And ever dwell Where sin and hell No more can vex our spirit. Draw us to Thee, Unceasingly, Into Thy kingdom take us; Let us fore'er Thy glory share, Thy saints and joint-heirs make us. Amen.

**The Believing Christian Meditates on the Out-
pouring of the Holy Ghost at the
Holy Festival of Pentecost.**

MORNING PRAYER.

O Spirit of Grace, who from eternity didst proceed from the Father and the Son, and who wast visibly poured out upon the apostles after the triumph and the ascension of my Jesus, I gladly call to mind this fact to-day; for by that event they were fitted for the discharge of their office. I pray Thee, enter also into my soul, that it may become a temple of the living God prepared by Thee and meet to obtain eternal life, for which I was created and purchased by my Redeemer.

Thou art the earnest of our adoption and our inheritance. Do therefore come to me also and assure me that I am a child of God, and that I have a well-grounded claim to the inheritance of the saints in light. Lead me into a true quietness of heart and mind, that I may have no pleasure in the bustle of the world and its sinful unrest, but flee from it and delight myself solely in Thee and with Thee. Sweep from my heart all impurity, wickedness, and sin, in order that with each year, week, yea, with each day I may become more pure. Remove farther and farther from me all evil, in order that it may become manifest that I have become another and a better man. Sanctify me, for else I shall not be able to see the Lord. Kindle in me also the true light which I still lack, in order that I may grow in Thy knowledge, have a desire to understand the ways of heaven, and employ all

diligence to enter upon them and to walk in them without growing weary.

Let me keenly perceive my misery, my perdition, and the need in which I am, in order that by such knowledge I may be brought to true humility of heart. Let me also recognize to what majesty and glory I have attained by Thy gracious indwelling, in order that I may be induced to love Thee more fervently. Let me become obedient to Thee by love; let me follow Thee in love and yield my heart to Thee that Thou mayest work in it. Whenever Thou workest in me, grant that I may not resist Thee, but may let myself be restrained by Thee from all evil and urged unto all good. Let me ever follow Thy promptings; let me always note and act upon Thy admonitions. Let me be guided by Thee through all my life in a straight path, and I shall continue to walk in the way which is called the right way, and travel toward heaven.

However, O precious Holy Spirit, when Thou hast thus worked in me, when Thou hast proved Thyself efficient in me, let me also, like the messengers of Jesus, after Thou hadst rested on them, speak with new tongues, so that everybody may hear that the old, sinful, unseemly words, which are unbecoming to a Christian, have now been removed far from my lips. Let all who associate with me see that I am become a different man, and let everybody perceive what Spirit is dwelling in me. And then sanctify me more and more, and let me thoroughly become in my spirit and my body Thy temple and remain such forever. Thus let me here in time attain to a firm assurance of my salvation

and to the possession of the righteousness of Jesus, of the divine peace which He has acquired, and find my joy in Thee. Hereafter let me attain the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, that is reserved in heaven for me. Let me come to the possession of a glorious crown, a beautiful robe of white; and let me praise and magnify Thee with the Father and the Son, world without end.

Come, God, Creator, Holy Ghost, And visit Thou the souls of men; Fill them with graces as Thou dost, Thy creatures make pure again. Amen.

EXHORTATION.

If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. *Luke 11, 13.*

Not only has the merciful love of God purposed from eternity to grant us many blessings; not only has Jesus purchased us with His holy blood; but the Holy Spirit, who is the most glorious, most necessary, and most blessed gift, desires to lead, sanctify, and govern us even in this vale of tears.

The Holy Spirit is (1) the most glorious gift. For what greater and nobler thing could God do for us than to give us His Spirit for our Leader and Guide in the way? The everlasting love of God was not content with having appointed the holy angels as our guardian keepers, to be at our side, to surround us, and to accompany us in all our ways; but the Holy Spirit was also to dwell in us, in order that our body and soul might be truly kept and preserved from evil. The Holy Spirit (2) is the most necessary gift. We can lack wealth, high honors, and great possessions, and yet live happily in this world; but without the Holy Spirit we cannot be truly happy either here in time or hereafter in eternity. For this reason the Holy Spirit (3) is the most blessed gift. He is the earnest of our inheritance, the seal of our sonship: through Him we are assured that we are the children of God and heirs of eternal life. We need Him most in sadness, in affliction, and temptation; for then He certifies to us that we are

nevertheless in a state of grace; when we are unable to offer prayers, He intercedes for us before God with groanings that cannot be uttered.

(4) God desires to give this glorious, necessary, and blessed gift to all who ask Him. We have no such promise regarding temporal and earthly things, because these are not always salutary for us. But the gift of the Holy Spirit God will refuse no one. (5) The Holy Spirit purifies the heart of a Christian from the love of the world and sin, in order that He, who is the good and pure Spirit, may make His abode in the Christian.

PRAYER.

“I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, and they shall grow as grass, as willows by the watercourses.” O dearest Jesus, Thou hast fulfilled this gracious promise on the holy festival of Pentecost, when Thou didst pour out Thy Spirit abundantly upon the apostles, and thus didst fit them for their work of proclaiming to all nations grace, the forgiveness of sins in Thy blood, and salvation. Faithful Savior, impart this gift also to me; give me also this glorious blessing.

Descend upon me in abundant measure, O blessed Holy Spirit, who wast revealed in flames of fire upon the apostles. Enlighten me unto life everlasting; enlighten my understanding, that I may know Jesus Christ. Sanctify my will, that I may desire and wish for nothing but what is pleasing to Thee. O Spirit of power, as the apostles were endued by Thee with strength on high, so strengthen my faith; give me courage and strength to walk in Thy ways, to overcome the world, to resist sin, and to live as a true child of God. O gracious Rain, make me fruitful unto all good works, refresh me in the heat

of temptation, and grant that I may bring forth abundant fruits in a life of faith.

O Spirit of Grace and Prayer, seal to me the joyful comfort that I am in a state of grace. Oh, pray in me and with me; yea, teach me to pray with true devotion; excite me to devotion and to the praise of God. O Spirit of Wisdom, rest upon me that I may know and do what pleases God. O Spirit of Knowledge, rest upon me, that I may walk in Thy truth. Unite my heart to fear Thy name. Guard my understanding against error, dispel from it all darkness of ignorance and self-love, kindle in me the light of Thy knowledge, that I may daily increase in love and knowledge of Thee. O Spirit of the Fear of God, rest upon me; implant in my heart Thy holy fear, that I may nevermore sin knowingly and wilfully. O Spirit of Love, rest upon me; remove from my heart all anger, stubbornness, envy, wickedness, and vengeance.

Be my Comforter in affliction and sorrow, when the floods are about to overwhelm me, and the waves would engulf me. Be my Strength when I am weak. Help me to quench the lust of the flesh. Let faith, love, humility, hope, and patience grow in me. Be my Guide, and lead me always in a straight path that I may not stumble, fall, nor act contrary to the commands of God. Be my Teacher and lead me into all truth and glorify Jesus in me. O Thou Pure Water, wash me; grant, that I may grow in all that is good and bring forth much fruit. Help me by Thy power that I may truly call Jesus Lord, and own Him as my Jesus, my Redeemer, my Savior, the Foundation of my salvation and my eternal happiness.

O Thou Light of my soul, behold how I am surrounded in this world with innumerable temptations; for many deceivers have gone forth. Therefore keep me, lest I stray from Thee. Show me the way in which I must walk; for I lift up my soul unto Thee. If I would be my own guide, I should err; but when Thou leadest me, I shall walk in the way of Thy statutes.

O blessed Holy Spirit, if I have hitherto grieved Thee, I am heartily sorry for it. Behold, my heart is open to Thee; O enter in and fill it with the rich gift of Thy grace, with all Christian virtues. Stabilish me, make me firm, and preserve in me the good work which Thou hast begun in me. O create in me a new heart; remove from it all naughtiness, all evil habits, and all dominion of sin. Take away from me the heart of stone, and give me a heart that is sanctified and changed by Thy grace. Dwell in me, and let me be Thy temple and abode. Thus I have the earnest of my inheritance and sonship; and thus I know for a certainty that I shall obtain everlasting salvation.

O Holy Spirit, abide with me in every time of need and in death; cry Abba, Father, in me in that hour. Give me a glimpse of the eternal glory and a foretaste of the eternal joy into which I shall enter, when after the fight I shall obtain the crown, and after the sorrows of this present life the joy of heaven.

Holy Ghost, Strength of the simple, O make Thine abode with me, Let me ever be Thy temple; Cheerfully I welcome Thee. Do Thou purify my heart, Cast out all things that might part Me from those sweet joys of heaven Which by Thee to faith are given. Amen.

HYMN.

O Holy Spirit, enter in,
And in our hearts Thy work begin,
Thy temple deign to make us;
Sun of the soul, Thou Light divine,
Around and in us brightly shine,
To joy and gladness wake us.
That we To Thee
Truly living, To Thee giving
Prayer unceasing,
Still may be in love increasing.

Give to Thy Word impressive power,
That in our hearts, from this good hour,
As fire it may be glowing;
That we confess the Father, Son,
And Thee, the Spirit, Three in One,
Thy glory ever showing.
O stay And sway
Our souls ever, That they never
May forsake Thee,
But by faith their refuge make Thee.

Thou Fountain, whence all wisdom flows,
Which God on pious hearts bestows,
Grant us Thy consolation,
That in our pure faith's unity
We faithful witnesses may be
Of grace that brings salvation.
Hear us, Cheer us
By Thy teaching; Let our preaching
And our labor
Praise Thee, Lord, and bless our neighbor.

Left to ourselves, we shall but stray;
O lead us on the narrow way,
With wisest counsel guide us,
And give us steadfastness, that we
May ever faithful prove to Thee,
Whatever woes betide us.

Lord, now Heal Thou
All hearts broken, And betoken
Thou art near us,
Whom we trust to light and cheer us.

Thy heavenly strength sustain our heart
That we may act the valiant part
With Thee as our Reliance;
Be Thou our Refuge and our Shield
That we may never quit the field,
Bidding all foes defiance.
Descend, Defend
From all errors And earth's terrors:
Thy salvation
Be our constant consolation.

O mighty Rock, O Source of life,
Let Thy dear Word, 'mid doubt and strife,
Be so within us burning
That we be faithful unto death,
In Thy pure love and holy faith,
From Thee true wisdom learning!
Thy grace And peace
On us shower; By Thy power
Christ confessing,
Let us win our Savior's blessing.

O gentle Dew, from heaven now fall
With power upon the hearts of all,
Thy tender love instilling,
That heart to heart more closely bound,
Fruitful in kindly deeds be found,
The law of love fulfilling.
Then, Lord, Discord
Shall not grieve Thee; We receive Thee;
Where Thou livest,
Peace, and love, and joy Thou givest.

Grant that our days, while life shall last,
In purest holiness be passed,
Be Thou our Strength forever;

Grant that our hearts henceforth be free
From sinful lust and vanity,
Which us from Thee must sever.
Keep Thou Pure now
From offenses Heart and senses,
Blessed Spirit!
Let us heavenly life inherit.

EVENING PRAYER.

Holy Ghost, with light divine, Shine upon this heart of mine! Chase the shades of night away, Turn the darkness into day. Let me see my Savior's face, Let me all His beauties trace; Show those glorious truths to me Which are only known to Thee. Holy Ghost, with power divine, Cleanse this guilty heart of mine: In Thy mercy pity me, From sin's bondage set me free. Holy Ghost, with joy divine, Cheer this saddened heart of mine; Yield a sacred, settled peace, Let it grow and still increase. Holy Spirit, all divine, Dwell within this heart of mine; Cast down every idol-throne, Reign supreme and reign alone. See, to Thee I yield my heart, Shed Thy life through every part. A pure temple I would be Wholly dedicate to Thee:—thus, Thou greatest Comforter in every sorrow, O blessed Holy Spirit, I find that, before retiring, I must pray for Thy gracious indwelling and Thy heavenly gifts because I have been convinced to-day that Thou wouldst gladly set up and prepare a tabernacle of God among men. Make also my heart Thy tabernacle, because it longs with yearning for this blessing.

To this end glorify Jesus in my soul, that I may begin to love and receive Him and thus obtain power to become a child of God and His temple. Glorify

Him in me, as regards His person, His blessing, and the grace which He has acquired for me, that I may accept Him as my only Savior, and may seek and find forgiveness of sins in His name. Glorify Him in me, as regards His virtues and His conversation among men, by which He has left me an example that I should follow after. Let His glory, His humility, His meekness, His holiness, His purity, His love, His sincerity, and His truth be reflected in my heart and shine as a bright light, manifesting themselves in my entire life. Glorify Him in me as regards His majesty and glory, which for my sake He did not employ in the state of humiliation, but resumed after the work of redemption was completed, and with which He is now clothed, sitting at the right hand of His heavenly Father. Grant that I may worship, adore, and serve Him as the only Mediator between God and myself. If Thou wilt thus glorify Jesus in me, I shall be united with Him by faith; I shall be conformed to His image by fellowship with Him; and by following Him I shall be led to the Jerusalem above.

O Spirit of Grace, help me to attain to this blessedness. Without Thee I cannot call Jesus my Lord. Oh, therefore, work in me a true and living faith; work and accomplish in me all that is necessary to the end that Jesus may be formed in me, and that I may become His own. Hear my sighing; give ear to my supplication; accept my prayer, and grant me the grace which I desire.

When Thou shalt have done these things, when Jesus shall have been glorified in me, let me bear witness of Him, as His apostles bore witness, after

Thou hadst been poured out upon them in abundant measure. Let me bear witness of Him in my entire life, that I may order my life, conversation, and conduct in obedience to His Word and will. Let me bear witness of Him in my heart by acknowledging Him the true Messiah and the very God, by serving Him, and believing in Him. Let me bear witness of Him with my lips, by praising and magnifying Him both in private and in public, and by confessing Him at all times, in order that He in turn may confess me before His heavenly Father. Let me also bear witness of my Jesus in afflictions, by cheerful trust in Him, by firmly hoping and relying, and by patiently waiting for His help. Finally, let me bear witness of Him also in death, by remaining faithful even in that hour and by hoping in faith to receive the crown of life at His hand.

If Thou wilt thus make me constantly bear witness of my Savior, He will in due time bear witness of me also, and confess me before His Father who is in heaven. Oh, how happy, how blessed, I shall then be! O Spirit of Jesus, guide me to this blessedness. I trust in Thee; let me never be ashamed. I surrender myself to Thee. Oh, bring me to heaven, and let me never be led astray into wrong paths.

Love divine, all love excelling, Joy of heav'n, to earth come down, Fix in us Thy humble dwelling, All Thy faithful mercies crown: Jesus, Thou art all compassion, Pure, unbounded love Thou art; Visit us with Thy salvation, Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit Into every troubled breast! Let us all in Thee inherit, Let us find that second rest. Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be,— End of faith as its beginning, Set our hearts at liberty. Come, almighty to deliver! Let us all Thy life receive; Suddenly return, and

never, Nevermore Thy temples leave. Thee we would be always blessing, Serve Thee as Thy hosts above; Pray and praise Thee without ceasing, Glory in Thy perfect love. Finish then Thy new creation; Pure and spotless let us be: Let us see our whole salvation Perfectly secured by Thee! Changed from glory into glory, Till in heaven we take our place, Till we cast our crowns before Thee, Lost in wonder, love, and praise. Amen.

The Believing Christian Contemplates the Mystery of the Holy Trinity.

MORNING PRAYER.

Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory — with these words it behooves me, now that I arise from sleep, to praise Thy exalted name, O adorable God, who hast manifested and revealed Thyself as one in essence, yet distinct in persons. This day which Thy goodness has permitted me to see moves me to consider this great and blessed mystery of the Godhead and to employ it for my profit. Oh, grant me grace to accomplish my purpose! Manifest Thyself to me as my God, that I may be encouraged and prompted to show myself Thy obedient creature!

Father of mercies, Thy hand has fashioned me; Thy power created me when I was yet in my mother's womb, and brought me forth into the light of day; Thy faithfulness has preserved and maintained my spirit. Oh, do not cease to be faithful to me, but forever show Thyself to me as a loving Father. However, let me also conduct myself toward Thee with the humbleness and reverence of a child, and by Thy grace strive after the highest degree of perfection.

Lord Jesus Christ, Thou only-begotten Son of

the Highest, my Mediator, Redeemer and Savior, do not cease to hold Thy merit and Thy blood before Thy Father whenever He would in His just anger condemn, reject, and cast me from Him on account of my trespasses, iniquities, and sins. O eternal High Priest, do not cease to intercede for me and to gladden me with Thy heavenly blessing. Do not cease Thy work in me. Do not grow weary of calling me unto Thy grace, but do Thou work in me that Thy image may be formed in me. Let none of Thy redeemed ones be lost; and hence, let me also have light in Thee, and let me have and enjoy it more abundantly.

O Spirit of Grace, have mercy on me and be not far from me with Thy gifts. Comfort and refresh my poor soul when I am grieved; hold me when I stumble, and place me on my feet again. When I stray, point me to the right way and lead me in a plain path. Pray with me whenever I pray; teach me how and what to pray, and give my feeble words and sighs power to move my Father in heaven, to touch His heart, and to procure help for me from Him.

O Triune God, manifest Thyself thus to me, and I will praise Thy name, spread abroad Thy glory, live according to Thy will, and, finally, when Thou summonest me, gladly quit this world of trouble and look for a gracious reward of my faithfulness from Thy mercy. When my depraved reason excites all manner of doubts in me, as if it were impossible that Thou, O hidden God, who dwellest in a light which no man can come unto, art one in essence and three in persons, let me take my reason captive in the obedience of faith, and not lend my ear to its sug-

gestions. Strengthen my faith in Thee, and let me cling so firmly to Thy Word and testimonies that even the gates of hell shall not be able to prevail against me or rob me of my faith. When my sluggish flesh and blood would not gladly follow Thee and live according to Thy will, grant me strength and ability from Thy inexhaustible divine fulness to submit myself to Thee and to become obedient to Thee in all my life. Let me show my faith by my works, adding to my faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. Thus let me walk before Thee here in holiness and righteousness, and let me finally pass from believing to seeing. Then, when I shall see Thee face to face, I shall with all the elect praise Thee forevermore, even as I now make a beginning and say with a heart that has been touched by Thy love:

The Lord, my God, be praised, He who forever liveth, To whom the heavenly host E'er praise and honor giveth; The Lord, my God, be praised, In whose great name I boast, God Father, God the Son, And God the Holy Ghost. To Him we now sing praise, With joy our offering bringing, And with the angel host The "Holy! Holy!" singing; To Him all Christendom Sings praises joyfully. The Lord, my God, be praised Throughout eternity! Amen, Hallelujah, Amen! Amen.

EXHORTATION.

There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. *1 John 5, 7.*

When a believer is about to begin a sacred meditation of the mystery of the Holy Trinity, he must do as one who would obtain light and benefit from the sun and make the sun serve him. If he looks into the sun with unprotected eyes, he becomes blinded; he sees nothing but darkness, yea, he sees nothing at all. But if he

keeps his eyes cast down and thus uses the light and the splendor of the sun, he sees much, yea, he sees all that he ought to see.

The mystery of the Holy Trinity is (1) a mystery incomprehensible to reason. We cannot comprehend this statement: one essence and three persons. Accordingly, many have stumbled at this doctrine of the Creed. Until this day there are those who in this respect believe as the Jews do. Notwithstanding this, the mystery of the Holy Trinity is (2) clearly described in the Holy Scriptures. It is declared in some of the choicest passages of the Old and New Testaments. At the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan three persons were revealed. Matt. 3, 17. The works and the properties of the Triune God are also clearly described and manifest before our eyes. A devout Christian believes this Word of life, until in the life everlasting he will come to see what he has believed.

In the mean time, (3) he worships the thrice-holy God with humbleness of heart. He praises his Creator because of all the benefits which He has bestowed on him, on both body and soul. He thanks his Redeemer because He has delivered him from death, from sin, from the devil, and from the power of hell. He surrenders his heart and his entire life to the Sanctifier, studies to obey the Triune God, and rests assured that he will at last behold in glory what he has believed while on earth. For blessed are they which have not seen and yet have believed.

PRAYER.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory. With these words, O Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I now join all the seraphim and all the cherubim in their hymn of praise and sing Thy sovereignty, majesty, and glory. O Thou self-existent, unfathomable, and incomprehensible Being! My faith firmly clings to Thy holy and revealed Word alone, in which Thou hast gloriously revealed Thyself to me. This is life eternal that men may know Thee, O Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.

O Father of all grace and mercy, who hast made Thyself known to me as my Father, I worship Thee,

I honor and praise Thee. Thou hast not only from eternity begotten Thine only Son Jesus Christ, but art also the true Father of whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named. Thou hast hitherto, as a gracious and loving Father, nourished, sustained, kept, and preserved me; yea, even to this very hour Thou nourishest, sustainest, and preservest me. O merciful Father, look upon me still with cordial and fatherly compassion as Thy child.

Lord Jesus, Son of God, I have learned to know Thee from Thy holy Word as the second person of the Holy Trinity, eternally begotten of the Father in heaven, God of God, Light of Light, sprung into being in a manner incomprehensible to us. I have also learned to know Thee as my brother and kinsman, who took upon Himself our human nature and redeemed me and all men from sin, death, the devil, and hell. Therefore I rejoice in Thee and worship Thee. Thou art my Righteousness, my Redeemer, my Advocate, my High Priest, my Mercy-seat, my Mediator, my Immanuel, my Savior, and my Shepherd. In Thee I have life, and have it more abundantly. Thou art the Paschal Lamb that was given for my sins. Thy precious blood is the cleansing of my iniquities. Through Thee I have access to grace and life. In Thee I am saved, here in time and hereafter in eternity.

O blessed Holy Spirit, Thou hast revealed Thyself to me in Thy Word as the third person of the Godhead, proceeding from the Father and the Son, of one essence, of equal majesty and glory with them. Thou hast regenerated me in Holy Baptism. Through Thee I have been brought to grace, to light,

and to the life that is of God. Thou art my Sanctifier, who enlightens, sanctifies, and keeps me in true faith. Thou comfortest me in suffering, Thou cheerest me in sadness, Thou refreshest me in tribulation. O Spirit of Grace and of Prayer, seal to me the comfort that I am in a state of grace. Bear witness with my spirit that I am a child of God. Arouse me to prayer. Give me the spirit of devotion while praying, and joyfulness when I have prayed.

Oh, come let us worship and bow down and kneel before the Lord, the Triune God who has made us; for we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. His judgments are unsearchable, and His ways past finding out. Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things; to Him be praise, honor, and glory forevermore. The Father is made of no one, neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father, not made, not created, but begotten. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and the Son, not made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. Among these three persons none is first, and none is last; none the greatest and none the least; but all three are equal: the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God. And yet there are not three gods, but there is one God. The Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Ghost is Lord. And yet there are not three Lords, but there is one Lord.

O Triune God and Lord, grant that I may ever grow and increase in this knowledge, that I may embrace Thee in faith, and may firmly cling to Thy holy Word as the norm of my faith and life. Grant that what I cannot comprehend I may nevertheless believe from my heart, until I shall pass from faith

to sight. Meanwhile, my Father, cover me with the wings of Thy grace, and bless me. O Jesus, wash me with Thy holy blood and bless me; make me righteous and save me forevermore. Lord God, the Holy Ghost, enlighten me and bless me, that I may walk in Thy light, and in Thy light may behold the light of joy in heaven above.

Rise, then, to Him, the Ever-blest, And learn to know Him rightly; Such knowledge can alone bring rest, And make thy soul burn brightly With the pure flame of holy love, Which cheers thy course to heaven; For God will show Thee things above, Which here 'tis only given To hear of, and see darkly. Amen.

HYMN.

All praise be to the Lord,
My God, my Life, my Teacher;
My Maker, Him whose word
Made me a living creature;
My Father, who doth shield
And keep me day by day
And make each moment yield
New blessings on my way.

All praise be to the Lord,
My God, my Life, my Savior;
The Father's Son, adored,
The gift of God's good favor;
Whose blood bought my release
From sin and shame and death;
Who giveth grace and peace
And life to me through faith.

All praise be to the Lord,
My God, my Life, my Solace;
The Holy Ghost, outpoured,
Who to the Son doth call us;
Who doth my soul revive
And strengthen me with might,
And when with ill I strive
Gives comfort, help, and light.

All praise be to the Lord,
The God who ever liveth;
Praise Him with one accord
All ye whom life He giveth.
Praise ye the Lord alone,
The Holy One confest,
The Father and the Son
And Spirit ever blest.

To Him with joyful song
Let us new praise be bringing,
And with the angel throng
Thrice "Holy, Lord," be singing.
The Church on earth, in heav'n
Doth praise Him and adore;
All praise to God be giv'n
Both now and evermore.

EVENING PRAYER.

O holy Triune God, filled with joy and gladness, I once more appear before Thy throne before hastening to my place of rest, because I have to-day heard the glad tidings and have been convinced that Thou comest to dwell in the hearts of those who love Thee. I regard this as the greatest glory of which a rational creature of Thine is capable, and my soul is glad and leaps for joy.

True, the world judges otherwise, and regards those as unhappy men who yield their heart to Thee for Thy habitation, not only by denying themselves all worldly pleasures, but also by being compelled to wrestle and fight daily, lest sin gain dominion over them. But I know and am persuaded that it is well with the righteous, and that great glory and blessedness are prepared for them. Therefore, I long for Thy indwelling and experience a fervent desire for it.

Come, O Triune God, come into my soul and dwell in me. Make me entirely new. Let me no longer live unto myself, but unto Him that died for me and rose again. I know that Thy indwelling is no mere fancy, such as the perverted world imagines it to be. Nor is it merely the bestowal of Thy gifts, still less does it mean that man is changed into God. But Thou comest to us according to Thy essence, not in the manner in which Thou art present with all the ungodly, but by Thy special grace, so that we are united with Thee as intimately as the branch with the vine, the head with the members, the soul with the body. What unspeakable grace! How greatly dost Thou ennoble those who are Thine. O God, in making them partakers of Thy Spirit and Thy power! When Thou dost enter thus into my soul, it is no longer I that live, but Thou livest in me, Thou speakest through me, Thou walkest and workest all things in me.

Let me therefore continually go in Thy strength, that it may always be said of me: Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men! Know ye not that Jesus Christ dwelleth in you? This is the source of my true blessedness, in which I delight with all my heart and which I anxiously desire. A bright light now arises in me, causing me to see my sins and Thy grace, and urging me to flee the former and to seek the latter. With Thee new life comes into me. Now I am no longer powerless, so as to be carried away by every sin, but I can do all things through Thee who strengthenest me. Now I have comfort in every sorrow, under all vicissitudes and trials. How happy, then, I am even in this present life! And

how blessed shall I be in eternity when I shall remain in Thy fellowship and shall see Thee as Thou art! O grant me this in mercy! Let me remain in a state of grace and grow therein. Let me never again drive Thee from me, but be united with Thee, till in eternity I shall behold Thee forevermore.

I give immortal praise To God the Father's love, For all our comforts here, And better hopes above: He sent His own eternal Son To die for sins that man had done. To God the Son belongs Immortal glory too, Who bought us with His blood From everlasting woe: And now He lives, and now He reigns, And sees the fruit of all His pains. To God the Spirit's name Immortal worship give, Whose new-creating power Makes the dead sinner live: His work completes the great design, And fills the soul with joy divinè. Almighty God! to Thee Be endless honor done, The undivided Three, The great and glorious One: Where reason fails, with all her powers, There faith prevails and love adores. Amen.

The Believing Christian on St. Michael's Day Meditates on the Guardianship of the Holy Angels.

EXHORTATION.

Are they [the angels] not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? *Heb. 1, 14.*

The holy angels were created by God for His service and glory, being appointed to stand around His throne continually and to execute His commands. If a great king were to appoint his body-guard and attendants for the service of another, that would be a token of love and grace. Accordingly, (1) a believing Christian thanks God for this special grace that God has not only given Himself with all His blessings and gifts for his enjoyment; has not only sent Jesus Christ for the salvation of his soul; has not only appointed the Holy Ghost as his Comforter and Guide, but has also made the holy angels to keep guard over him.

(2) Therefore, a Christian does not drive the holy angels from him by wilful sins, but he causes them to rejoice over his repentance and godly conversation. (3) A Christian strives, while

still on earth, to become like unto the holy angels, by daily praising God, glorifying Him, returning thanks to Him, and by rendering Him acceptable service. Whoever in his life remains a devil, that is, a stiff-necked, obstinate, unconverted man, and a brazen sinner until his death, can never, after death become like the angels. (4) A believing Christian, in accordance with the Third Petition, seeks diligently to do God's will on earth as it is done in heaven. (5) A believer does not worship the angels; for such honor belongs only to the Lord of the angels, and not to fellow-servants. Rev. 19, 10.

(6) In this condition of faith, love, godliness, and the fear of God a believing Christian perseveres unto His end, knowing that the holy angels will not only keep him from harm in the works of his calling and in the paths appointed for him by God, but that they will also stand around his bed in his dying hour, and when he has died, will carry his soul into Abraham's bosom.

PRAYER.

The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them. O merciful and loving God! Now I rejoice that Thou hast given Thy holy angels for my protection and defense! Lord, Lord, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him, and regardest him so highly? If it is a high honor when a king assigns his body-guards and attendants to wait on a humble person, how much greater glory is it when the holy angels are made to act as protectors and companions to us poor human beings!

O God of love, in Thy unspeakable goodness Thou hast not only appointed all visible creatures, heaven, earth, sun, air, sea, all fruits and products of the earth, for our enjoyment, but Thou hast also appointed the invisible creatures, the holy angels, for our service, that no evil may befall us. Thou knowest, O loving Father, how Thy children on

earth are surrounded by many dangers and much misery. Therefore Thou hast appointed watchmen for them to watch over them by day and night and to avert from them all evil. Thou knowest how many and strong enemies Thy believing children have about them; the prince of darkness, Satan, and his host: therefore Thou hast provided them with mighty heroes who are to resist these foes and guard Thy loved ones.

O my God, when weeks, months, yea, years pass, one after the other, and I remain uninjured in life and limb, suffer no harm in house, home, and property, yea, am unmolested and unoffended in my pursuits, no misfortune coming nigh me, should I not ascribe all this to Thy fatherly faithfulness, love, and mercy, because Thou hast kept and preserved me through Thy ministering spirits? Oh, how many dangers of which I was not aware hast Thou turned aside by the mighty protection of Thy holy angels! Let me then, O my God, fervently love and greatly praise Thee now and forevermore.

However, O loving Father, I pray Thee to command Thy angel also in the days to come to attend and guard me as Thine own. Let Thy angel avert from me danger and misfortune, as was done for Jacob, who was met and accompanied by the hosts of God when greatest danger at the hands of his brother Esau threatened him. Fortify my house round about with Thine angel host, as was done for the house of Job. Let them be with me in adversity, as they were with Daniel. Let them drive all misfortune from me, as they turned away the flames from the three men in the fiery furnace. Let them

guard my business and my daily bread, as they brought meat and drink to Elijah. Yea, let them encamp round about me, accompany and assist me in my journeys, as they did Tobias.

O gracious God, grant me Thy Holy Spirit that I may not grieve these holy creatures of Thine by my sins, nor drive them from me by reckless living, forcing them to stand afar and to forsake me because of my wickedness. Grant that even in this life I may become like the angels by serving, praising, obeying, and glorifying Thee, to the end that I may be like the angels also in the joy and the bliss of the life everlasting. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven — let this prayer resound in my ears and in my heart henceforth forevermore. My God, let Thy holy angels remain with me in death that they may carry my soul into Abraham's bosom and accompany me to glory. There let me forever be in their fellowship and company, rejoice with them over Thy glory and majesty, chant with them: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts! and praise Thee for this as well as for all Thy blessings forever and ever.

Stars of the morning, so gloriously bright, Filled with celestial resplendence and light; These that, where night never followeth day, Raise the "Thrice holy, Lord!" ever and aye! These are Thy ministers; these dost Thou own, Lord God of Sabaoth! nearest Thy throne. These are Thy messengers; these dost Thou send, Help of the helpless ones, man to defend. When by Thy word earth was first poised in space; When the far planets first sped on their race; When was completed the six days' employ, Then "all the sons of God shouted for joy." Still let them succor us; still let them fight, Lord of angelic hosts! battling for right: Till where their anthems they ceaselessly pour, We with the angels may bow and adore. Amen.

HYMN.

Lord God, we all to Thee give praise,
Thank-offerings meet to Thee we raise,
That Thou didst angel hosts create
Around Thy glorious throne to wait!

They glow with light and heavenly grace,
And constantly behold Thy face;
Obedience to Thy voice they yield,
And are with godly wisdom filled.

They never rest nor sleep as we;
Their whole delight is but to be
Forever near Thee, gracious Lord,
Thy little flock to watch and guard.

The foul old Dragon and dread Foe
With envy, hate, and wrath doth glow;
It always is his aim and pride
Thy Christian people to divide.

As he has blighted earth of old,
He keeps e'en now his deadly hold,
Chafes madly to annihilate
All virtue, honor, Church, and State.

Therefore, no halt or rest he knows;
A roaring lion, round he goes,
Or lies in wait with baneful snare
To drive the Christians to despair.

But watchful is the angel-band,
That follows Christ on every hand,
And guards Thy holy Christendom
From harm that might from Satan come.

From Daniel's case this may be seen
When he sat in the lions' den,
And likewise angels rescued Lot
That the ungodly harmed him not.

When the Three Hebrews were at last
Into the fiery furnace cast,
No power had fiercest flames to harm
Against the rescuing angel's arm.

And thus our God, still at this day,
 From harm and many an evil way
 Keeps us by His dear angel-guard,
 Placed o'er us as our watch and ward.

For this, now and eternally,
 Our praise shall rise, O God, to Thee,
 Whom all the angel-hosts adore
 With joy now and forevermore.

We also pray Thee to defend
 By them unto the latter end
 Thy fold, that little flock, O Lord,
 That holds in honor Thy blessed Word.

THIRD PART.

Prayers for Various Spiritual and Bodily Blessings.

The Believing Christian Prays for Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal Blessings.

EXHORTATION.

God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him. *Ps. 67, 6. 7.*

Every Christian asks something of God in prayer: however, when doing so, every one should carefully consider how he prays and for what he prays. A Christian prays (1) for temporal things, such as health, prosperity, food, the warding off of danger, help in trouble, support in suffering, and deliverance out of trouble. Such prayers God does not decline because in His holy Word He has promised us all these things.

But the Christian does not stop at these things; they are of lesser importance. He prays (2) for spiritual blessings: for the Holy Ghost, for a godly heart, for the kingdom of God, which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. *Rom. 14, 17.* He prays for enlightenment, growth in goodness, sanctification, and

the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are the chief blessings he can ask and obtain from God; and if these are granted, he regards them as his greatest treasure.

A Christian prays (3) also for things eternal: for a blessed end, for a joyful departure from this world, and for entrance into the life of joy which he had desired, that after his conflict is over he may behold the face of God, and robed in white garments, may forever rejoice in God. Hence a believer must pray chiefly for spiritual and heavenly blessings, if he would pray aright and in a manner acceptable to God. At the same time he must, however, (4) study to lead a blameless Christian life, lest his prayer be hindered by his evil conscience.

PRAYER.

O bountiful and gracious God, how great and glorious, how rich and mighty art Thou! Thou possessest all things, and canst bestow all things. Behold, I, Thy child, come to Thee and ask Thee for Thy gifts. Thou knowest that I have brought nothing into the world, that I have nothing of myself, except sin. Therefore, any good thing that I possess has come from Thee; for every good gift, every perfect gift is from above. Yea, what hast Thou, O man, that thou didst not receive?

O my God and Father, make me, above all, rich in my soul. Give me Thy Holy Spirit; give me a godly heart; convert me; enlighten me that I may daily become a new man. Help me to struggle and labor, that I may conquer evil desires, put away bad habits, separate myself from the world, and, on the other hand, surrender my body and my soul to Thee as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto Thee. Behold, my God, to how many dangers and temptations I am exposed in this world; therefore, guide me by Thy power, lest I be led astray, or depart from Thee. Dwell in my soul, govern my heart, and grant me

grace to be a living member of the body of my Jesus, and a new creature; then I shall be quite rich, quite honored, and quite blessed in this world.

O generous God and Father, provide for me also in earthly things. Thou knowest what I need; Thou seest what I lack. However, do not give me anything as I will, but all things as Thou wilt. If health is good for me, give me a sound body that I may more successfully discharge the duties of my calling. Give me food and raiment; for Thou knowest that without these I cannot live. Accompany me in all my ways; preserve me from evil; add Thy blessing to my labor, for what Thou blessest, O Lord, that is blessed indeed. Thou hast placed me in this world; therefore Thou wilt know also how to sustain and provide for me. I cast all my burdens and all my cares upon Thee. O God, care for Thy child, preserve Thy child, and let me ever taste abundantly Thy fatherly faithfulness and grace.

But since Thou, O great God and Father, hast not created me for this earthly life only, I hope for still greater blessings. For if I had nothing to expect from Thee than what I have received for this life, I should be the most wretched of men. Therefore, my Father, give me also the heavenly blessings; keep me in faith until my blessed end; let me depart this life trusting in the death of Christ; receive my soul into Thy heavenly mansions, into Thy joy. If it be in accordance with Thy holy will, grant me to die in the possession of my reason; and after my departure from this life bring me to the company of the elect in heaven, that with them I may be crowned, glorified, clothed in robes of white, be-

hold Thy holy countenance, and rejoice in Thee forever.

O my God, hear the voice of my supplication, and refuse not the petition of my lips. Give me of earthly things such as it pleases Thee to give, and such as are salutary and useful for me; but as regards spiritual and heavenly things, give me a rich measure of Thy grace, and in due time bring me, Thy child, to the assembly of the saints in light, that I may be united with Thee here in faith and love, and in heaven forevermore.

Let our going out be blest. Bless our entrance in like measure; Bless, O Lord, our toil and rest. Bless our bread, our grief, and pleasure. Be in death Thy blessing given. And make us blest heirs of heaven. Amen.

HYMN.

What canst thou earn, O soul,
With all thy toil and care?
'Tis He who makes thee whole,
And answers every prayer;
He who liveth evermore,
He who giveth evermore.
Come, then, to Him and be blest,
Change thy burden for His rest.

O slow of heart to learn
The lessons of His grace!
Will "doing" ever earn
The right to see His face?
Peace He giveth, overflowing,
Perfect peace, and past our knowing.
Hear the faithful and the true:
"My peace give I unto you."

What is thy need to-day?
The power to conquer sin?
To watch and work and pray?
To be all pure within?

Come to Him who ever liveth,
Take the grace He freely giveth;
Hear the promise speak to thee:
"As thy days thy strength shall be."

He gives, when we receive,
He cannot give before;
He gives as we believe —
Full measure, more and more.
King of kings, He ever liveth,
Like a king He ever giveth;
Blessings doubled, so we read,
"Over and above" our need.

The Believing Christian Thanks God for His Health.

EXHORTATION.

Better is the poor, being sound and strong of constitution, than a rich man that is afflicted in his body. Health and good estate of body are above all gold, and a strong body above infinite wealth. There is no riches above a sound body, and no joy above the joy of the heart. *Ecclesiasticus 30, 14—16.*

God distributes to men diverse gifts, spiritual and bodily, and of bodily gifts health may be reckoned among the foremost. A healthy man, if he be godly besides, is a happy man; but if, on the other hand, he be ungodly, he is the most unhappy. A healthy man is happy because he can serve God and his neighbor without hindrance, attend to his calling, and accomplish much good. But if a man in sound health is not godly, he makes the most appalling misuse of this noble gift by his commission of many sins and iniquities. How wholesome would it be for many a one if he were lame, dumb, blind, or afflicted with pain, so that he could not perpetrate so many sins with his feet, his tongue, his eyes, and his body! On Judgment Day, therefore, people guilty of such abuse of healthy limbs will face a great reckoning, and a well-merited eternal punishment will follow.

A true Christian recognizes the noble blessing of good health, and that (1) by thanking God, whenever he looks upon his healthy limbs. (2) He employs his sound limbs in the service of God, by reverently attending divine worship at God's house and by grow-

ing in his Christian religion; (3) by offering service to his fellow-men; (4) by discharging the duties of his calling in a faithful and honest manner.

(5) He recognizes that health is not an abiding and permanent blessing; that, when God so wills, pain, sickness, lameness, and disease may be visited upon him. (6) Accordingly, in the days of health he does not abuse his health by wantonness, recklessness, and malice, lest, when days of sickness and suffering come, his conscience say to him: This is God's punishment for the abuse of thy health. For God must put bit and bridle upon many a healthy person who is obstinate, by visiting him with bodily infirmity, in order that he may cease sinning. (7) A pious Christian is diligent in prayer in the days of health, because he does not know whether he will have strength in days of sickness; and thus his health is employed to a good purpose.

PRAYER.

O Thou gracious and merciful God, how great is Thy love and goodness which Thou showest me, not only by keeping me in Thy gracious protection, but also by permitting me to begin and complete one year after another in good health! O my God, I acknowledge that this is one of those good gifts which come down from above, from Thee, the Father of lights.

Lord, Lord, who am I that Thou shouldest show such mercy on me? Daily I see before me people who are sickly, miserable, and infirm. I hear many complaining that they must spend their lives on the sick-bed in tedious idleness,—many who probably are much more God-fearing and pious, and who pray with greater devotion than I; and yet to me Thou givest good health, strength, and vigor. O Lord, I am not worthy of all the mercies which Thou hast hitherto bestowed and dost still bestow upon me.

Preserve me, O my God, that I may not abuse this noble gift of health by luxurious living, wantonness, pride, and insolence, but make me to understand that by this gift Thou wouldest excite me to gratitude and godliness. As long as I may still have to live, help me to employ my health for Thy praise and honor, for the benefit of my neighbor, and for the accomplishment of the duties of my calling. If it be in accordance with Thy holy counsel and will, preserve my health and my soundness of limb, in order that I may without hindrance frequent Thy house diligently, and sing hymns of praise and thanksgiving in Thy temple.

Give me Thy Holy Spirit that I may consecrate my sound limbs to Thy service, and my sound understanding to my growth in Thy knowledge. O my God, grant me strength and ability to increase in the inward man, that I may be sound in faith, fervent in spirit, patient in tribulation, devout in prayer, sincere in my love to Thee and my fellow-man, Christlike in my conversation, rejoicing in hope and confident in death! O sanctify me; bless me; let Thy good Spirit lead me in the land of uprightness!

O God, Thou faithful God, Thou Fount that ever flowest, Without whom nothing is, Who all good gifts bestowest; A pure and healthy frame O give me, and within A conscience free from blame, A soul unhurt by sin. Amen.

HYMN.

Soul, what return has God, thy Savior,
For all He gives thee day by day?
O hast thou in thy gift a favor
That can delight and please Him? — say!
The best of offerings He requires:
Give Him thy heart with its desires.

Give God His own, if aught thou'rt giving;
 Say, soul, to whom belongs thy heart?
 Can Satan, he who hates the living,
 Or any creature claim a part?—
 To Thee alone I will assign,
 O Lord, my heart and all that's mine.

Accept the gift which Thou requirest,
 The first-fruits of my heart, O God!
 The offerings Thou so much desirest,
 And dearly paidst for with Thy blood;
 To Thee alone I now resign
 My heart to be forever Thine.

Whom should I give my heart's affection
 But Thee, who givest Thine to faith?
 Thy fervent love is my protection.
 Lord, Thou hast loved me unto death.
 My heart with Thine shall ever be
 One heart throughout eternity.

The Believing Christian Prays God to Sanctify His Heart.

EXHORTATION.

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. *Heb. 12, 14.*

When a believing Christian views himself in his natural depravity, he remembers (1) that he cannot make himself holy, but that this is a work of God. Therefore, (2) he uses the means appointed by God for his sanctification. He remembers his holy baptism, in which the Holy Ghost was poured out on him and took up His abode in his heart; and he inquires diligently whether he has not in after years driven this good Spirit from him by wilful sins. He knows that the Lord's Supper is a food for sanctification; therefore, whenever he receives it, he seeks to have his soul and body and all his members become sanctified by it. He listens reverently to God's Word, and treasures up in his heart what he has heard, in order that he may grow in holiness. (3) For his sanctification both in his body and in his soul is to be accomplished

by the power of God and the operation of the Holy Spirit. If the soul is sanctified, his entire life must be spent in true sanctification; all his thoughts, words, and deeds must be fashioned according to the rule of holiness.

(4) This sanctification must take place betimes; it must not be deferred to old age or to the hour of death; but it must be begun while a person is still able to pray and to use the means of sanctification intelligently. (5) This sanctification, moreover, should be manifested at all times, on all occasions, even when a person happens to be among worldly men. We should show by our conduct, words, and deeds that we have a sanctified heart, and that our lips and our entire life are governed by the Holy Spirit. Such a sanctified soul shall one day be admitted to the place where the saints dwell in light.

PRAYER.

O Holy Spirit, I am seized with fear whenever these divine words strike my ears: "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy"; and again: "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." When I ponder these sayings and measure against them my unholy heart, my unholy thoughts, my unholy words, my unholy deeds, I am often thrown into great anguish, and I become ashamed of the unbecoming and unholy life which I have led. For, alas! obeying the promptings of my heart and the habits of worldly men, I have sinned with them and have offended Thee with unholy words and deeds. Oh, if no one shall see Thy face without holiness, how few shall be saved, and oh, how many shall be damned! Help, Lord; for godly men have ceased.

Therefore, O Thou holy God, make me to understand all these things well that I may with sincere earnestness follow after true inward and outward holiness. O Jesus, sanctify me by Thy righteousness, by Thy merit and blood. Give to me, who am by nature unholy, Thy holiness, that, clothed in it

as my most beautiful robe, I may be able to appear and stand before Thy heavenly Father. Sanctify my life by Thy holy Word. Sanctify my heart that it may be always occupied with good thoughts. Sanctify my lips that they may speak nothing that is unbecoming, unchristian, and wicked. Sanctify my will, that I may will and do only what is pleasing to Thee. O holy God, draw me away from the world and unite me with Thee, that through Thy Holy Spirit I may have the witness in me that I am born again, that I am a child of God and in a state of grace.

But let this sanctification be genuine, that I may not be holy only outwardly, and seek holiness while at church, while attending Holy Communion, or when I am engaged in other sacred actions; but let me be truly holy and follow after holiness in all places, at all times, on all occasions, even when I must live entirely in the society of worldly men. Let me under such circumstances speak, live, and act as a child of God, and remain in such a blessed state until death, when Thou wilt bring me to the company of the saints and elect in the everlasting light of joy.

'Tis Thine to cleanse the heart, To sanctify the soul, To pour fresh life on every part, And newcreate the whole. Dwell, therefore, in our hearts; Our minds from bondage free: Then shall we know and praise and love The Father, Son, and Thee. Amen.

HYMN.

I do not come because my soul
Is free from sin, and pure, and whole,
And worthy of Thy grace;
I do not speak to Thee because
I've ever justly kept Thy laws,
And dare to meet Thy face.

I know that sin and guilt combine
To reign o'er every thought of mine,
And turn from good to ill;
I know that when I try to be
Upright, and just, and true to Thee,
I am a sinner still!

I know that often when I strive
To keep a spark of love alive
For Thee, the powers within
Leap up in unsubmissive might,
And oft benumb my sense of right,
And pull me back to sin.

I know that, though in deeds of good
I spend my life, I never could
Atone for all I've done:
But though my sins are black as night,
I dare to come before Thy sight,
Because I trust Thy Son.

In Him alone my trust I place—
Come boldly to Thy throne of grace,
And there commune with Thee:
Salvation sure, O Lord, is mine,
And, all unworthy, I am Thine,
For Jesus died for me!

The Believing Christian Prays God to Govern and Guide Him.

EXHORTATION.

Teach me Thy way, O Lord; I will walk in Thy truth. Unite my heart to fear Thy name. *Ps. 86, 11.*

This life is nothing else than a journey. We enter upon it at our birth; and when we die, the journey is ended together with our life, and we pass into eternity. The question is: On what way are we traveling during this life? If we are traveling a good way, the way of faith and the fear of God, our journey ends in the glory of heaven. If we walk on the broad way, the

way of unbelief, malice, wickedness, our journey will end in hell, in eternal damnation.

When a Christian ponders these facts, he should (1) picture to himself two ways which lie before him in this life, the narrow way which leads to heaven, and the broad way which leads to hell. But he should with all diligence pursue the way to heaven. (2) In order that he may enter and remain on the narrow way, he should pray God to govern and to guide him. (3) If he prays God for His holy guidance and direction, he must not look around to see how the children of this world live and on what ways they are traveling; for if he undertakes to follow them, God's Spirit ceases to guide him; yea, He departs from him.

(4) Now, just as a traveler needs a guide to show him the right way, so a believing Christian needs the Spirit of God to show him the right way in which he should walk. To this end, however, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the heart is necessary, that it may be said of the Christian: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" 1 Cor. 3, 16. If we have this trusty Guide in us and with us, He will also regulate our thoughts, our lips, our senses, and our desires. (5) A believing Christian does not resist this holy rule, nor does he resist the Holy Spirit, but he suffers himself to be led, encouraged, and guided, and is confident that he will be safely guided here in time and hereafter in eternity. O blessed guidance! Happy is he who has God for his guide.

PRAYER.

Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me; Thou art acquainted with all my ways. Thou seest and knowest full well, O dear Lord, that I have a hearty desire to walk in Thy ways and to live as Thou hast commanded Thy children to live and as Jesus has taught us to live by His example. But, alas! I find that I am led astray from the good way and from my purpose by temptations now on this side, now on that. Now it is my own heart that leads me astray by wicked desires; now it is the world with its bad example. Whichever I follow, I incite

Thee to anger, O my God and Lord, and wound my own conscience. The nearer I approach to the world, the farther I stray from Thee.

Therefore I pray Thee, lead and guide me by Thy counsel. Thou hast said: "I will guide thee with Mine eyes." Here I am, Lord; let Thy good Spirit lead me in the land of uprightness. Behold, I yield myself entirely to Thee, my God. Thou didst lead Thy people dry-shod through the Red Sea; Thou didst bring them unharmed through the wilderness to the Promised Land. Lead me through the dangers of this life, through the wilderness and the temptations of this world, with a good and unsullied conscience, into the life eternal. I commit my heart, my mouth, my members, and my entire life unto Thee. Govern my heart, and fill it ever with holy thoughts. Govern my limbs, that my hands may not reach out after forbidden things, and that my feet may not walk in the paths of sin that lead to hell. Govern my life and my tongue, that they may not utter curses, or shameful, unchristian, and unbecoming words. Govern my entire life, that henceforth I may never sin against Thee wilfully, but may be called and in truth be a true and pious Christian.

Oh, forsake me not if in weakness I should resist Thee, and leave me not to my own guidance. For if I lead myself, I shall be led astray. Give me a holy carefulness in all my actions, and write Thy holy fear in my heart that I may regulate my life solely by Thy Word and by the example of my Jesus.

Guard, O God, our faith forever; Let not Satan, death, or shame Ever part from us our Savior; Lord, our refuge is Thy name. Though our flesh would fain say *nay*, Be Thy Word to us still *yea*. Amen.

HYMN.

Dear Savior, who in Palestine,
O'er mountain, plain, and sea,
Didst often press 'mid souls like mine,
To draw them near to Thee,
So draw Thou me.

In home and by the highway side,
Among the needful men,
Thy feet once bore Thee far and wide,
To strew Thy blessings then;
Now bless again.

Thy voice, like music on the air,
Rose pain and grief to break;
'Twas healing, living accent there,
Glad eye and ear to make;
Thus mine awake.

By couch and tomb they saw Thee stand
Where death had spent its might,
When, at Thine own divine command,
The life came back to sight;
So be our light.

So once Thy guiding, helping Word
In grace and power came,
So by the soul-sick be it heard,
Conveying grace the same,
In Thy dear name.

Though sense may not Thy presence know
As once on earth beheld,
Thou still to faith dost mercy show
As in the age of old —
All unexcelled.

O Savior, would Thou more wert known!
So hard of heart to be,
So to withhold, in sin, Thine own —
Withhold their love from Thee —
Their life from Thee!

The Believing Christian Prays that True Love of God May be Kindled in His Heart.

EXHORTATION.

God is Love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. We love Him because He first loved us.

1 John 4, 16—19.

God is Love; and because God is Love, He desires that all His believing children should also abide in true love. Love is a bond which is mutually to unite God and our heart; it is also to unite us with our neighbor's heart.

Accordingly, (1) a believing Christian prays God that He would fill his heart with His holy love. For this gift, too, is one of those good gifts which come down from above. (2) Nor must he despise the means by which the love of God may be awakened and increased in him, namely, the devout hearing and meditation of the Word of God and the worthy use of the Holy Supper. (3) If he dwells in the love of God, he must manifest his love by a holy Christian conduct, becoming speech, and God-pleasing works. For love is like a fire: it cannot hide its flames and smoke.

(4) He must be very careful, however, lest he relapse into the love of the world like Demas; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Out of love to God, therefore, he must avoid the world and the friendship and society of the world, because these draw him away from the love of God. (5) He must abide in this love until death, and thus depart this world with the love of God in his heart. (6) This love of God must increase in him as he increases in years. We ought to be ashamed to have spent twenty, thirty, yea, forty years in the lust and love of the world, and during all that time to have forgotten to love God. For such waywardness a Christian, when God has opened his eyes, should make amends by all the more fervent, ardent, and constant love, and should abide in such love until death.

PRAYER.

O loving and gracious God, Thou alone art worthy to be loved. Thee, and Thee alone, I ought to love with all my heart and with all my soul and with all my strength. Oh, I acknowledge and confess before Thee with exceeding great sorrow of my

soul that my love to Thee, my faithful Creator and loving Father, to Jesus, my Redeemer and Savior, and to the Holy Spirit, my Teacher and Guide, has not only been extinguished in me by original sin, but that I have not at all times yielded to the calling and operation of Thy grace and to the promptings of Thy Holy Spirit by which true love of Thee might again have been kindled in my heart.

I pray Thee, do change my heart. Pluck from it all love of the world and of sin, and let these words be ringing in my ears: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Destroy in me all love for the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, to all of which, alas! I am very much inclined by nature. Kindle in me by Thy Holy Spirit a pure and true love of Thee, that I may love Thee as the highest good for Thine own sake alone, and flee all vanities of the world. For if I desire to be a child of God, the love of sin, of the world, and of self must be cast out of my heart, and I must love Thee alone above all things.

Therefore, my God, I come to Thee and pray Thee: Grant me Thy Holy Spirit that He may plant this noble, necessary, and Christian grace in my heart. In His strength I will love Thee, my God, with all my heart and constantly. My soul shall think of Thee; my lips shall speak of Thee; Thou shalt be dearer to me than all the world and its joys, dearer than all earthly fortune and glory, yea, dearer than all men. From love of Thee I will cease to sin knowingly; from love of Thee I will shun all sinful persons and societies; from love of Thee

I will begin to become truly pious, and order my life only according to Thy Word and will. I will honor and fear Thee; I will serve, follow, and obey Thee.

O loving God, enkindle this love in my heart more and more, that I may not love Thee only for a few days, weeks, or years, but that my love of Thee may be ever increasing and continue to my blessed end. Fill me with courage whenever I am called upon to suffer for my love of Thee; strengthen me at such times by Thy mighty aid. Thus let me be united with Thee in love here in time and hereafter in eternity.

Thee will I love, my Crown of gladness, Thee will I love, my God and Lord, Amid the darkest depths of sadness, Not for the hope of high reward, For Thine own sake, O Light divine, So long as life is mine. Amen.

HYMN.

O Love Divine, how sweet Thou art!
When shall I find my wand'ring heart

All taken up in Thee!

Oh, may I daily live to prove
The sweetness of redeeming love,
The love of Christ to me!

God only knows the love of God;

Oh, may it now be shed abroad

To cheer my fainting heart!

I want to feel that love divine;

This heavenly portion, Lord, be mine—

Be mine this better part.

O that I could forever sit

With Mary at my Master's feet!

Be this my happy choice;

My only care, delight, and bliss,

My joy, my heaven on earth, be this,

To hear the Bridegroom's voice.

O that I might, with happy John,
 Recline my weary head upon
 The blest Redeemer's breast!
 From care and fear and sorrow free,
 Give me, O Lord, to find in Thee
 My everlasting rest.

The Believing Christian Prays God to Implant in His Heart the Love of His Neighbor.

EXHORTATION.

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from Him that he who loveth God love his brother also.

1 John 4, 20. 21.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13, 34. 35) — with these words Christ describes by what mark His true disciples shall be known, namely, by the love which they show to their neighbor. No one should imagine that it is possible for him to dwell in the love of God while he hates his neighbor. This can never be.

However, we are to regard as our neighbor (1) our friends, our benefactors, and relatives. When loving these persons we indeed fulfil our duty, but this is not an exclusively Christian virtue; for the unbelieving also love their friends, benefactors, and relatives, as long as these do nothing to injure them. We are to regard as our neighbor (2) the person living next door, our fellow-citizens, and strangers, yea, even persons who envy us, take advantage of us, and hate us.

It is especially towards this second class of our neighbors that we are to manifest our love, and that, (1) not only by wishing them no harm, by not reviling them, by not returning evil for evil, but rather by wishing them everything good, by showing them love and friendship, and by loving them as we love ourselves. (2) As regards our enemies, we must banish from our heart all bitterness, revengefulness, hatred, and malice; and, on the other

hand, we must show by word and deed that we bear them no grudge and hatred, but only cherish love for them in our hearts. We must do, really and truly, what Jesus says: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5, 44. 45.

PRAYER.

O loving and kind God, Thou lovest us fervently, and from such love Thou blessest us in body and soul. But Thou hast also commanded us to extend a similar love to our neighbor. Alas! I confess unto Thee that my heart is utterly unfit for such sincere and true love of my neighbor. According to Thy commandment I should love my neighbor as myself. When Thou blessest him with good fortune, health, and prosperity, I ought to rejoice, as though these blessings had been bestowed on myself. I ought cordially to love my enemy, who hates, reviles, persecutes, and offends me; I ought to pray for him, wish him well, yea, request from Thee many blessings, prosperity, and happiness in body and soul for him.

But, O omniscient God, Thou seest how far my heart is from the fulfilment of these duties. Alas! when Thou blessest my neighbor, granting him good fortune, honor, and benefits, and Thou dost not grant the same blessings to me, I look on him with envy because Thou art so kind to him. O omniscient God, Thou seest how my prayers for my enemies are so listless and weak: I either forget entirely to pray for them, or whenever I do think of them,—for Thy Spirit often reminds me of this duty,—I mention them only in a few words. O my God and

Father, I perceive from these things the misery and depravity in which I still lie, and I see that I am not yet in the state of the true disciples of Jesus in which I ought to be, and which is known by this, that the followers of Jesus have love for one another, not only for their good friends and benefactors, but also for such as envy, hate, and persecute them.

I pray Thee, therefore, do change my revengeful heart which rebels against Thy holy will, so that by Thy grace I may love my neighbor as heartily and sincerely as myself. Grant me strength and power that I may rejoice when beholding the blessings which Thou bestowest on my neighbor, and that I may not look grieved when Thou dost not at the same time cheer me with equal blessings. Preserve me from all deceitfulness towards him, that I may not pretend to be friendly towards him in words while I am hostile towards him in heart; that I may not, like Judas, kiss and betray him, but be honest in my dealings with him. And if I must suffer persecution, abuse, and wrong from my enemies, grant me strength to overcome these ills with meekness, not returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; on the contrary, let me wish them blessing and all manner of good.

O Lord, my God, Thou seest how hard it is for flesh and blood to fulfil this duty; but by Thy grace and with Thy aid it shall be made possible for me. Grant, O heavenly Father, that I may always have my eyes fixed upon the perfect love with which Thou hast loved us while we were yet Thine enemies. Grant that I may always keep before my eyes the

love of Jesus, who prayed for His enemies and did good to them. Write into my heart the merciful love of Thy Spirit, who never wearies of working on my rebellious heart and knocking at its door. Grant that these reflections may move me to true love of my neighbor, and that I may thus receive the witness that I am a true disciple of Jesus.

And let me do to others As Thou hast done to me: Love all men as my brothers, And serve them willingly, With ready heart, nor seek my own, But as Thou, Lord, hast helped us, From purest love alone. Amen.

HYMN.

O Love, who formedst me to wear
The image of Thy Godhead here;
Who soughtest me with tender care
Through all my wand'rings wild and drear —
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine, to be.

O Love, who ere life's earliest dawn
On me Thy choice hast gently laid;
O Love, who here as man was born
And like to us in all things made —
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine, to be.

O Love, who once in time wast slain,
Pierced through and through with bitter woe;
O Love, who wrestling thus didst gain
That we eternal joy might know —
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine, to be.

O Love, of whom is truth and light,
The Word and Spirit, life and power,
Whose heart was bared to them that smite,
To shield us in our trial hour —
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine, to be.

O Love, who thus hast bound me fast
Beneath that gentle yoke of Thine;
Love, who hast conquered me at last,
Enrapturing this heart of mine —
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine, to be.

O Love, who lovest me for aye,
Who for my soul dost ever plead;
O Love, who didst my ransom pay,
Who for me e'er dost intercede —
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine, to be.

O Love, who once shalt bid me rise
From out this dying life of ours;
O Love, who once above yon skies
Shalt set me in the fadeless bowers —
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine, to be.

The Believing Christian Recognizes that God Alone Is the Highest Good.

EXHORTATION.

Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the Strength of my heart and my Portion forever.

Ps. 73, 25. 26.

It has been the desire of men at all times to have and possess the highest good; but the majority of them have failed in obtaining it, because of their ignorance as to what good is the highest and best of all. The very highest good must be a permanent and a perfect one; it must be able to raise us up and comfort us in suffering and death, in fortune and misfortune.

According to this description the very highest good cannot be (1) wealth, which many persons have regarded and still regard as their highest good. For wealth forsakes us in death, and cannot afford us any comfort in that hour. (2) Nor is honor and

prosperity the highest good; for how often does not the honored person fall into contempt and disgrace, and how often is not prosperity changed into adversity and misery! (3) Wisdom and skill have indeed this advantage over other earthly possessions, that we cannot be robbed of them; nevertheless they vanish at death.

In view of these facts a believing Christian seeks for a true and permanent good. This, however, (4) is God alone. Having God, a Christian has everything: the highest honor, the greatest wealth, the greatest wisdom, and that, in time and eternity. God cheers man in the day of happiness, sustains him under the cross and in tribulation, refreshes him in death, and remains united with him in eternity. Men can attain to this good only by hearing and reading the Word of God. By the operation of the Holy Spirit they can learn from this Word to know that they are sinners and to believe that Christ is their Savior. Having received this Word, they must be careful not to drive God away from them by again choosing for their highest good the love of the world with its vanity and sinful lusts.

PRAYER.

O God, rich in grace! How glorious, how lovely, how perfect art Thou! He that hath Thee hath all things, knows all things, can do all things; yea, he hath the very highest, best, and most excellent good. Write this knowledge deeply into my heart, that I may seek Thee alone and find Thee. Preserve my heart from the folly of worldly men who imagine that, when they enjoy great honors in the world, or possess great wealth, or obtain great pleasure and great glory, they have attained the highest good. How widely have they missed the mark! These possessions men must leave when they die; they do not follow them into eternity, do not comfort them in their last hour. Such persons pass into eternity naked and bare, yea, without God. Grant, there-

fore, that I may carefully distinguish the true good from that which passes away.

O Triune God, Thou alone art my highest, dearest, truest, and very best good! Thou desirest to give Thyself to me, to unite Thyself with me. Therefore unite with my soul in time and eternity. While all earthly things are exposed to the ravages of the enemies, moth and rust, while my foes can rob me of them, while misfortune can destroy them, God, my highest good, always remains my own. With Him I go out, with Him I go in; Him I take with me on my journeys; with Him I lie down to rest; yea, with Him I shall at length enter into the joy everlasting. Therefore, my God, whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. When I have Thee, I have true life, the greatest wealth, the true glory, the very highest good. Therefore dwell in me, live in me, abide with me. Then shall I have a helper in my crosses and sufferings, a support in need, the greatest wealth in poverty, the strongest comfort in sickness, yea, the sweetest consolation in my last hour. When the children of this world are forsaken by their possessions, God will not forsake me. This highest good I retain when I quit this world. Yea, this good will then be given to me for my inexpressible delight in still more perfect, more excellent, more glorious, and more abundant measure.

O Friend of souls, how blest am I Whene'er Thy love my spirit calms! From sorrow's dungeon forth I fly, And hide me in Thy shelt'ring arms. The night of weeping flies away Before the heart-reviving ray Of love, that beams from out Thy breast; Here is my heaven on earth begun; Who is not joyful, that has won In Thee, O Lord, his joy and rest? Amen.

HYMN.

O Lord, my best desire fulfil,
 And help me to resign
 Life, health, and comfort to Thy will,
 And make Thy pleasure mine.

Why should I shrink at Thy command,
 Whose love forbids my fears?
 Or tremble at the gracious hand
 That wipes away my tears?

No, rather let me freely yield
 What most I prize to Thee,
 Who never has a good withheld,
 Nor wilt withhold, from me.

Thy favor, all my journey through,
 Thou art engaged to grant:
 What else I want, or think I do,
 'Tis better still to want.

The Believing Christian Prays God to Preserve and Increase the Faith that has been Kindled in Him.

EXHORTATION.

If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. *Rom. 10, 9.*

Lord, increase our faith. *Luke 17, 5.*

As great as the unhappiness of an unbeliever, so great is the happiness of the soul of a believer who abides in the true knowledge of God, of Jesus Christ and His salvation. For an unbeliever is like a room that is not lighted, which therefore is gloomy and dreary. But a believing soul is like a room in which a bright light is shining. This light is faith. No man can give faith to himself; it is God who kindles faith in us, either through Holy Baptism, in which the Holy Ghost is shed on us abundantly, or through the Word of God, by which a person obtains the knowledge and understanding of his salvation, gives assent to the Word by the power of God, regards it with his whole heart as the divine truth, appre-

hends God with firm confidence, and appropriates Jesus Christ and His holy merit.

A believing Christian, therefore, should (1) thank God for bringing him to faith and to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and thus granting him a happiness above the happiness of Jews, Turks, and heathen. (2) He should remember his baptismal covenant and the glory which he has obtained by it, and should not wilfully break the covenant which he has made with God. (3) He should diligently and reverently hear God's Word, in order that he may become enlightened more and more and attain to greater knowledge. (4) He should reduce to practise what he hears and reads, and should manifest his faith by his works. Therefore, (5) a true Christian should not be content with saying: I believe, but he should also cause the fruits of faith, godliness, love, chastity, patience, meekness, and the like, to shine forth in his entire life. He must believe not only for a time, but must remain faithful unto God till death. Then he may comfort himself with the assurance that he will receive the end of his faith, the salvation of his soul.

PRAYER.

O gracious God, what great mercy hast Thou shown me, because Thou hast brought me to the true knowledge of my salvation, which is Jesus Christ with His merit, blood, and death. I know the means of salvation, the Word of God, and the holy Sacraments. And not only do I know these things, but I give assent to them all; yea, I place all my hope and confidence in them. Now I know the true way to heaven; for he that would come to God must believe in Christ. By this faith and knowledge I am set apart from the unbelieving Jews, Turks, and heathen.

O gracious God, grant me Thy Holy Spirit that He may produce this knowledge in me. Grant that my faith may not be a sham, dead and unfruitful; but that it may be a living faith. Since I know Jesus

Christ as my Savior, I will also love Him, obey Him, hold Him more dear than all the world; I will also serve Him, and will not do what my flesh and blood and the evil world prompt me to do. Nothing, whatever it may be, shall become dearer to me than Jesus.

Since I know the means of salvation, I will with Thine aid apply them for my salvation. I will devoutly hear Thy Word and live in accordance with it. I will flee and forsake what Thy Word forbids; on the other hand, I will in Thy strength, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, strive to fulfil the duties and practise the virtues which Thy Word commands. The Holy Supper shall sanctify me wholly. For the strengthening of my faith and for my salvation I will often partake of it devoutly as a food of sanctification, and will ever strive to grow in holiness.

O my God, increase in me faith, holiness, and obedience, that with each day I may become more pious, more devout, more God-fearing, and more conformed to the image of my Savior. Keep me in this grace to my blessed end, that I may live as a true and pious Christian, and as a true and pious Christian may also die in peace at the appointed time.

Now I have found the sure foundation, Where evermore my anchor grounds! It lay there e'er the world's creation, Where else but in my Savior's wounds? Foundation which unmoved shall stay When earth and heaven pass away. Amen.

HYMN.

I will never let Thee go,
Savior mine, for me once given.
Naught shall break the early vow
Made on earth and heard in heaven.
Light of life to me hereto,
I will never let Thee go.

I will never let Thee go
Long as life remains unquitted.
All I am to Thee I owe;
All to Thee I have committed.
Thine the only will I know,
I will never let Thee go.

Though my sight full soon decay,
Yea, though every sense forsake me;
Though the awful Judgment Day,
E'er I part from flesh, o'ertake me;
Though by death brought very low,
I will never let Thee go.

Never shall I let Thee go
When I stand at last before Thee,
Where who keep the faith below,
Glorified, shall see Thy glory.
Then Thou, Lord, that Joy bestow:
I will never let Thee go.

Not with earth nor heaven's pure height
Hath my eager soul beguiled me;
But with Thee enthroned in light,
Who to God hast reconciled me.
Freed by Thee from judgment's woe,
I will never let Thee go.

I will never let Thee go,
Onward will I press beside Thee.
Where the living waters flow
Thou forevermore wilt guide me.
Blest is He who keeps the vow,
I will never let Thee go.

The Believing Christian Prays for Humility.

EXHORTATION.

Be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God .that He may exalt you in due time.

1 Pet. 5, 5. 6.

Among the sins against which a believing Christian must contend is pride and haughtiness, which dwell in the heart and break forth in words and deeds. Since the fall into sin we are proud by nature, but we must become humble by grace. Whoever does not become humble cannot please God nor be a disciple of Christ.

When a believing Christian reflects on this fact, he prays God for a heart that is humble (1) towards God. For "He hath shown thee, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah 6, 8. However, a Christian will become humble towards God when he considers the greatness, majesty, glory, and holiness of God; when he bears in mind that all the angels, seraphim, and cherubim, and all the elect, worship and praise Him; and when he reflects, on the other hand, what a wretched worm he himself is, and remembers that he is nothing but a miserable being whom God can destroy in a minute.

A believing Christian will become humble (2) towards his fellow-men, when he holds himself in low esteem over and against his neighbor, and remembers that his neighbor may be much more humble, believing, pious, devout, and, therefore, more acceptable to God than he; when he bears in mind that he shares with his neighbor *one* Word, *one* Baptism, *one* Holy Supper, *one* heaven; yea, that in the grave he will, like the poorest beggar, decay and turn to ashes.

A believing Christian will become humble (3) in his estimate of himself when he reflects that all that he has, all his gifts, skill, blessings, life, prosperity, success, he has not received from himself, but only from God, who can quickly take all these things from him; and hence that he must not boast of them, nor exalt himself on their account, nor listen to the praise of flatterers. In order that he may not in any wise become proud, let him diligently place before himself the example of the humble Christ, who humbled himself beneath God and all creatures, and who admonishes us: "Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart."

PRAYER.

O great, holy, and merciful God, who art the High and Exalted One, before whose throne seraphim and cherubim and all the elect cover their faces in humility: I confess that by nature I am inclined to seek my own honor, to take pride in myself, and to exalt myself above all else. Through the fall into sin Satan has poisoned my heart with pride, with which sin began, so that I often forget that I am earth, dust, and ashes.

O my God, give me a humble heart, that I may become profoundly aware of the fact that I have life and breath, prosperity and all from Thee, to the end that I may humble myself under Thy mighty hand, and may not presume to offend Thee by thoughts, words, or deeds. Teach me to know my wretchedness and Thy great majesty; to know that from myself I have nothing but sin, death, and damnation; and that, whatever good there is found in me, I have received all from Thy gracious hand; so that I may not make a boast of anything, but regard all things as Thy gracious gifts which Thou canst quickly take from me again if in the multitude of Thy mercies I should forget Thee. Plant in my heart true humility, that I may obey, fear, honor, serve, worship, praise, and magnify Thee alone.

Plant in my heart true humility also towards my fellow-man, that I may never institute odious comparisons between him and myself, nor prefer myself before him. Help me to reflect that the proud have never yet been pleasing to Thee, but that Thou hast made Thy light, Thy comfort, Thy grace and goodness to flow abundantly into humble

hearts. Turn from me proud thoughts; grant that I may beware of proud words; preserve me from ambition and boastfulness, from which nothing but contempt of my neighbor will spring. Impress upon my heart the image of my lowly Savior, who humbled Himself below angels and men, and who speaks also to me, saying: "Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." Let this call of my Savior echo in my heart whenever my heart would become lifted up in sinful pride. If my fellow-man is a lowly person, keep me from looking down upon him. If he is exalted, rich, honored, let me view these advantages as Thy work, and acknowledge that Thou hast made him what he is, that Thou hast lifted him up and hast called him into his position, in order that I may not grumble before Thee on account of these things, nor envy him Thy gifts, but may rather rejoice in them.

O my God, help me to become converted and be as a little child, who thinks nothing of himself. Let me become nothing in my own eyes. Give me Thy Holy Spirit that I may daily die to the sin of pride, regard myself worthy of no honor from any one, but ascribe all honor, all glory, to Thee alone. Grant me to know with true humility of heart that all that I am and possess is mine by Thy grace; that I may not glory except in my weakness.

Teach me, by means of such humility, to live in peace and concord with all men. Let my heart always be a dwelling-place of the humble Christ; then I shall never exalt myself. Pride and haughtiness were the sin of Satan; from this sin preserve me by Thy grace. And if it should please Thee, O my God, to let me fall into contempt and ridicule, to permit

my enemy to revile me, and the haughty to trample me under foot, give me strength and ability to bear all with humility, resignation, and patience, and to make even these things serve me as aids to humility and to a greater carefulness in my conduct. O Lord, Lord, grant me strength and ability to do all these things by Thy mighty aid.

O keep me watchful, then, and humble, And suffer me no more to stray; Uphold me when my feet would stumble, Nor let me loiter by the way; Fill all my nature with Thy light, O Radiance strong and bright! Amen.

HYMN.

O God, forsake me not!
But lead full of compassion,
With loving hands Thy child
That I may gain salvation
When here my course is run;
Be Thou my Light, my Lot,
My Staff, my Rock, my Shield —
O God, forsake me not!

O God, forsake me not!
Take not Thy Spirit from me,
And suffer not the might
Of sin to overcome me;
Increase my feeble faith,
Which Thou Thyself hast wrought;
Be Thou my Strength and Power —
O God, forsake me not!

O God, forsake me not!
Lord, hear my supplication!
In every evil hour
Help me o'ercome temptation;
And when the prince of hell
My conscience seeks to blot,
Be Thou not far from me —
O God, forsake me not!

O God, forsake me not!
Thy mercy I'm addressing;
O Father, God of Love,
Grant me Thy heavenly blessing
To do the duty which
To me 'Thou didst allot,
To do what pleaseth Thee —
O God, forsake me not!

O God, forsake me not!
Lord, I am Thine forever,
Grant me true faith in Thee,
Grant that I leave Thee never;
Grant me a blessed end,
When my good fight is fought,
Help me in life and death —
O God, forsake me not!

The Believing Christian Prays for Meekness.

EXHORTATION.

Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. *1 Pet. 2, 21—23.*

After a person has made a good beginning in the Christian life and in his renewal, he must ever strive to become more perfect. He must not only seek to rid himself outwardly of gross sins, such as contempt of the Word of God, cursing, wantonness, levity, unrighteousness, sinful games, and worldly ways; but he must be concerned to become pure inwardly also, free from pride, envy, wrath, hatred, and revengefulness, and must prayerfully exercise all diligence to become meek.

(1) Meekness consists in not returning evil for evil, not reviling when we are reviled, not uttering threats against our neighbor from a hateful, angry, and revengeful heart. (2) We shall know whether we are meek and possess this noble virtue when we are attacked by an enemy who would deprive us of our honor, property, or good name; for a person who at such a time forthwith becomes

enraged, curses, reviles, utters threats, has not the meek spirit of Christ dwelling in him. (3) However, it is not contrary to meekness to seek protection against an enemy at the hands of the government. Thus Paul, when his life was threatened, appealed to Caesar and took shelter under the protection of Caesar. Acts 25, 11. (4) It does not become the children of God to bite like dogs, to tear one another with rage and bitterness like wild beasts. (5) In such persecutions, when we are oppressed by enemies, God desires to see a proof of our faith, and to lead us to a knowledge of our former sins, that we may ascertain whether we have not perhaps caused other people to groan in sorrow over our unjust procedure. (6) The marks of meekness are these: forgiving from the heart, praying for our enemies, Matt. 5, 44, wishing them well, doing good to them wherever we can, rejoicing in their prosperity, not paying attention to every word of reviling, not returning a reply to every word that is said against us, and being ready to become reconciled with our enemies.

PRAYER.

O loving God, who art very Love, and wouldst shed Thy love abroad in our hearts through Thy Holy Spirit, I confess to Thee with heartfelt sorrow that my heart is oftentimes quite rebellious and unmanageable. On occasions when my enemy presses upon me, persecutes and hates me, it ought to harbor humility, love, meekness, and gentleness. But, alas! instead of these needful Christian virtues, I find in me stubbornness, hatred, anger, revengefulness, and enmity, by which I am driven to speak harshly to those who wrong me, and to take revenge on those who have attacked me unjustly.

But, O God, when I learn from Thy holy Word that those who do such things shall not enter into the kingdom of God, and that such behavior in the presence of enemies is not a trait of God's children and true Christians, alas! I am alarmed at myself, because I still have the evil traits of the devil about

me, who is revengeful, malicious, and will never be reconciled. Therefore, I pray Thee, O Thou gracious God, have mercy upon me, and give me Thy Holy Spirit, that He may sanctify my heart and cleanse it from all malice and revengefulness. Help me always to behold the example of my Jesus, who reviled not when He was reviled, and when He suffered, did not threaten His enemies that He would some day take revenge on them, but committed all His affairs to Him that judgeth righteously.

Grant me, O Lord, such a quiet, meek, and peaceable mind, that I may not retain grudge and hatred in my heart, nor let the sun go down upon my wrath, but before nightfall, and ere I fall asleep, may heartily forgive my adversaries. Grant me strength that, when my enemy reviles me, I may be like a deaf person, who hears not, and like a dumb person, who opens not his mouth. On the other hand, grant me grace that I may be able to rejoice when my enemy prospers; that I may wish him all possible good, and be pleased when he obtains it; yea, that I may gladly assist him and do good to him whenever he fares ill.

Preserve me from betraying any enmity either in words, or gestures, or deeds; but let me with all my heart be as merciful towards my enemies as towards everybody else. Let me be kindly-spoken, sincere, pleasant in address, and also kind in actions, lest by my unforgiving spirit my prayer be hindered and all my worship and my devotion become reprobate. Grant that I may heartily forgive those who trespass against me, even as I would that Thou shouldest graciously forgive my faults and iniquities, lest I daily pray against myself. Let the bless-

ing descend on me which Thou hast promised to the meek: "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God." Bridle by Thy Spirit the evil lust which arises in me to war against this virtue, so that I may live and die as Thy believing child, and at last by Thy grace may be transferred to the home of peace.

Faith, and hope, and charity, Graciously, O Father, give me; Be my Guardian constantly, That no devil e'er may grieve me, Grant me humbleness and gladness, Peace, and patience in my sadness. Help me speak what's right and just, And keep silence on occasion; Help me pray, Lord, as I must; Help me bear my tribulation, Help me die, and let my spirit Everlasting life inherit. Amen.

HYMN.

Our Lord and Savior, from Thy birth
Thy footsteps to the cross we trace;
And all along Thy path on earth
We see Thee take the lowest place.

The world, its bitter hate and scorn,
Was met by Thee with patient grace;
Its taunts in meekest silence borne,
For Thou didst take the lowest place.

Thus didst Thou pour contempt on pride,
The pride of Adam's fallen race;
For Thou didst all Thy glory hide
To take for man the lowest place.

And for Thy Church Thou didst indeed,
O gracious Lord, Thyself abase;
As servant of Thy people's need
Stoop down to take the lowest place,—

That we might learn Thy lowly mind
(So fully hast Thou met our case),
And also have the joy to find
Thy presence in the lowest place.

Yea, from the manger to the cross
 We see Thee go with steadfast pace,
 Enduring grief, reproach, and loss,
 To suffer in the lowest place.

“A little while,” our Lord, and we
 In glory shall behold Thy face.
 Teach us till then to take with Thee
 Thy place on earth — *the lowest place.*

The Believing Christian Acknowledges the Constant Goodness of God.

EXHORTATION.

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness. *Lam. 3, 22. 23.*

For everything there is a season; the goodness and mercy of God, however, “endureth forever.” David in the 136th Psalm repeats this phrase at the close of each verse. The goodness of God is like that of a mother who takes her child when it is born into her arms, cares for it, nourishes and rears it: so God, too, does to us men.

Now, the believing Christian acknowledges this (1) as an unmerited kindness. Alas! such treatment we have not deserved of God. If He were to deal with us according to our desert, destruction would overwhelm us in body and soul. (2) It is a goodness which we need. If God were not so kind and merciful, we should waste away and perish, and could not live a day, yea, not an hour. For as no creature can live without air, so men cannot exist without the goodness of God. Yea, — and this is the most important! — it is (3) a *constant* goodness. When a believing Christian reviews his entire life, from his birth, through his childhood, youth, and ripening years, he beholds nothing else than God's goodness. Whatever good there is in us, God has wrought it. All that we possess in earthly things the goodness of God has given to us. Yea, what is still more wonderful, it is (4) a goodness which even the ungrateful and wicked share. On them also God makes His sun to shine; He gives them food and raiment; only

of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit they do not become partakers because they close their heart to Him.

However, a believing Christian also suffers the goodness of God to lead him to repentance, to the love and fear of God, and is assured that he will enjoy God's goodness even unto death, yea, throughout eternity.

PRAYER.

How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the rich treasures of Thy house, and Thou makest them drink of the river of Thy pleasures. Goodness like this I, too, have experienced, O my God; it has been renewed to me every day, every hour, every week, yea, every year. When I was born, Thy goodness like a nurse and mother took me into its arms and reared me. Thy goodness led me by the hand in my youth and accompanied me everywhere. In my mature life Thy goodness has provided for me, supported me, sustained me, and bestowed many blessings on me. Yea, till this day and this hour in which I am standing before Thee Thy goodness has hovered over me; Thy light has shone upon me, and Thou hast filled me with blessing, grace, and consolation. This goodness of Thine has oftentimes preserved me from misfortune and injury; Thy goodness and faithfulness has kept me in all my ways and attended my going out and coming in, lest any harm befall me. This goodness of Thine has also made my soul bright with heavenly light, illumined me by Thy Word, sanctified me by the Holy Spirit, and brought me to a true and living knowledge of Thee.

O my God, let Thy goodness continue to be over

me, and do not forsake me in old age when I become gray! Let Thy goodness and faithfulness be my guides until death, until they have brought my soul to its comfort in Thy bosom and my body to its rest in the earth. Moreover, let Thy goodness lead me to repentance, that, contemplating the blessings which I have received, I may yield Thee my heart for a dwelling-place and my soul for Thy possession. According to all Thy goodness have mercy upon me if perchance I err and sin in weakness. Bring me back by Thy mercy to the way of repentance and peace, and let me relish Thy grace here in time and hereafter in eternity. For all Thy goodness vouchsafed unto me I thank Thee and praise Thee from my inmost heart. Not only do I praise Thee here while I live, but I will also praise Thee, O good and merciful God, yonder through all eternity.

Alas, that I should ever Have failed in love to Thee, The only One who never Forgot or slighted me! Oh, for a heart to love Thee More truly as I ought, And nothing place above Thee In deed, or word, or thought! Amen.

HYMN.

My soul, now bless thy Maker!
Let all within me bless His name,
Who maketh thee partaker
Of mercies more than thou darest claim!
Forget Him not, whose meekness
Forgaveth all thy sin;
Who healeth all thy weakness,
Renews thy life within;
Whose grace and care are endless,
And saved thee through the past;
Who leaves no sufferer friendless,
But rights the wronged at last.

He shows to man His treasure
Of judgment, truth, and righteousness,
His love beyond all measure,
His yearning pity o'er distress;
Nor treats us as we merit,
But lays His anger by,
The humble, contrite spirit
Finds His compassions nigh;
Far as the heavens above us,
As break from close of day,
So far, since He doth love us,
He casts our sins away.

For as a tender father
Hath pity on his children here,
He in His arms will gather
All who are His in childlike fear.
He knows how frail our powers,
Who but from dust are made,
We flourish as the flowers,
And even so we fade,
The wind but o'er them passes,
And all their bloom is o'er, —
We wither like the grasses,
Our place knows us no more.

His grace alone endureth,
And children's children yet shall prove
How God with strength assureth
The hearts of all that seek His love,
In heaven is fixed His dwelling,
His rule is over all.
Angels in might excelling,
Bright hosts, before Him fall!
Praise Him who ever reigneth,
All ye who hear His Word,
Nor our poor hymns disdaineth; —
My soul, O bless the Lord!

The Believing Christian Ponders the Future Glory of the Children of God.

EXHORTATION.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure. *1 John 3, 2, 3.*

Every true Christian should daily, yea, hourly, ponder three things: who he is, namely, a child of God; what God is to him, namely, a Father, a Benefactor, and the very best of friends; and what he has yet to expect from God, namely, heavenly joy and glory. This reflection will kindle and strengthen in him love of God, and rouse hatred and contempt for the world and every sinful mode of life.

For (1) even in the present life the believers possess great glories, namely, the forgiveness of sin, divine sonship, peace with God, a Comforter in every affliction, an Advocate and Intercessor, joy of soul, and rest in God. Compared with this glory, silver, gold, money, and even a king's crown must be esteemed as nothing. (2) Great glories they have awaiting them after this life, namely, their entrance into heaven, the privilege of beholding the Triune God, the society of the holy angels and the elect, deliverance from all suffering, everlasting happiness, and finally, a glad and blessed resurrection of the body.

A believing Christian should (3) rejoice at this prospect, comfort himself with it whenever he meets with tribulation, and be assured that all his sufferings will at last be turned into endless rejoicing. In particular, however, he must (4) not trifle away these glories by a sinful, worldly life, but remember that he has been destined for something still more glorious. To this end (5) he abides in faith and holiness of life, looks upon earthly things as things that pass away and that he must leave behind, while, on the other hand, he often directs his heart yonder where he longs to be forever.

PRAYER.

O how gracious, kind, and merciful art Thou, O eternal and mighty God; because not only didst Thou create man in great glory, but when he had

fallen, Thou didst once more promise great glory to all who will accept Thy grace and obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit by faith and a holy life. For such regenerate and sanctified souls may comfort themselves with the reflection that they possess great glory even here in time, namely, sonship with God, the righteousness of Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, peace with Thee, Thy favor, grace, and love to which they may always claim a fearless access by prayer, and from which they can obtain help and mercy in their troubles.

To this glory a still greater will be added hereafter; for when the soul has departed from the body, it is promised admission forthwith to the vision of Thy countenance, the fellowship of the saints, and abundance of heavenly joy. This glory will be shared also by the body after the resurrection, in which it will be transfigured and shine as the sun.

O my God, grant me grace always to have this glory before my eyes, and to consider that, dying, I shall really begin to live, that in death my misery, but not my life shall have an end, and that I shall then pass from unrest to rest, from tribulation to joy, from anguish to supreme delight, from sadness and this vale of tears to consolation.

O keep me in faith and godliness, and when the world would lead me astray, let me call to mind who I am, namely, Thy child, and what I have to expect at Thy hands, namely, everlasting glory and bliss, in order that I may nevermore love the world and miss the glory of heaven on account of it. Grant me to walk cautiously, not as the unwise, but as the

wise, being careful of every step as were those who ran in a race in order that they might obtain the prize; so that at the end of my life I may be able to say truthfully: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the righteous Judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.

It is not death to die; To leave this weary road, And 'midst the brotherhood on high To be at home with God. It is not death to close The eye long dimmed by tears, And wake, in glorious repose To spend eternal years. It is not death to bear The wretch that sets us free From dungeon chain, to breathe the air Of boundless liberty. It is not death to fling Aside this sinful dust, And rise, on strong exulting wing, To live among the just. Jesus, Thou Prince of life! Thy chosen cannot die; Like Thee, they conquer in the strife, To reign with Thee on high. Amen.

HYMN.

Farewell! I say with gladness,
False, evil world, farewell!
Thy life is sin and sadness,
With thee I would not dwell;
In heav'n are better pleasures,
I long for that bright sphere
Where God grants endless treasures
To those that served Him here.

Do with me as it pleases
Thy heart, O Son of God!
When anguish on me seizes,
Help me to bear my load;
Nor then my sorrows lengthen,
But take me hence on high;
My fearful spirit strengthen,
And let me calmly die.

When all around is darkling,
 Thy name and cross, still bright,
 Deep in my heart are sparkling,
 Like stars in blackest night.
 Appear Thou in Thy sorrow,
 For Thine was woe indeed,
 And from Thy cross I borrow
 All comfort heart can need.

Thou diedst for me, — O hide me
 When tempests round me roll;
 Through all my foes, oh! guide me,
 Receive my trembling soul.
 If I but grasp Thee firmer,
 What matters pain when past?
 Hath he a cause to murmur
 Who reaches heav'n at last?

O write my name, I pray Thee,
 Now in the book of life;
 So let me here obey Thee,
 And there, where joys are rife,
 Forever bloom before Thee,
 Thy perfect freedom prove,
 And tell, as I adore Thee,
 How faithful was Thy love.

The Believing Christian Makes Confession and Prays God for Forgiveness of His Sins.

EXHORTATION.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. *Ps. 51, 1. 2.*

The state of a Christian — to have a gracious God — is verily the happiest. True, the world imagines that possessing riches, being honored, faring sumptuously constitutes happiness, but it deceives itself; all these things must pass away and often lead to a bad conscience, a heavy responsibility, and an unhappy death.

Accordingly believing Christians (1) examine their conscience every day, whether they are still in the grace of God. (2) When they go to confession, they not only remember their sins, but heartily pray God to forgive them; they repent of them, they mourn over them, they seek refuge in the mercy of God and in the blessed wounds of Jesus, and humbly cry for mercy.

And when God by the mouth of His servant has granted them the forgiveness of their sins, they take comfort therein; however, (3) they strive to keep a gracious God by letting the Holy Spirit rule them. They are eager to lead a Christian life and show it by their speech, words, and works; they flee vice and their former sinful habits, and then they know that, living and dying, they will have a gracious God.

PRAYER.

Holy, Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I, a poor sinner, have come before Thy most holy countenance and pray Thee heartily and humbly to forgive all my sins. O my God, I observe, alas! that in many ways I have provoked Thee to anger by many evil thoughts, words, and deeds. Lord, Lord! I am grieved over this, and heartily sorry for it. Through Holy Baptism Thou hast made me a sheep of Thy pasture and a member of Thy body; hence I ought to hear Thy voice and be obedient to Thee alone. Yea, being Thine own, I ought to present my members a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto Thee. But, alas! what shall I say? I have more often listened to the voice of the world and of my flesh than to Thy voice, and have in many ways done what is displeasing to Thee. Oh, the blindness of my heart! Oh, the folly of my youthful years! If now Thou wilt enter into judgment with me and deal with me according to Thy justice, I am lost forever; for my conscience bears witness against me, and my sins are more than the sand on the seashore.

Take pity on me according to Thy great mercy. O my Father, do not charge against me what evil I have done during the time of my life, but credit me with what Jesus Christ, my Savior, has done for me. I lay hold in true faith of the blood which He shed for me; I make His merit my own and say: For Jesus' sake be merciful to me, a poor sinner. Henceforth I shall begin to lead a new and godly life, and shall no longer sin wantonly and wilfully against Thee, O Triune God.

Lord Jesus Christ, in Thee alone My only hope on earth I place, For other comforter is none, No help have I but in Thy grace. There is no man nor creature here, No angel in the heav'nly sphere, Who in my need can succor me. I cry to Thee, For Thee I trust implicitly. Amen.

HYMN.

"Jesus sinners doth receive!"
 Oh, may all this saying ponder
 Who in sin's delusions live,
 And from God and heaven wander!
 This alone sure hope can give —
 "Jesus sinners doth receive!"

We deserve but grief and shame,
 Yet His words, rich grace revealing,
 Pardon, peace, and life proclaim;
 Here their ills have perfect healing
 Who with humble hearts believe —
 "Jesus sinners doth receive!"

Sheep that from the fold did stray
 Every faithful shepherd seeketh;
 Weary souls that lost their way
 Christ the Shepherd seeks and taketh
 In His arms that they may live —
 "Jesus sinners doth receive!"

Come, ye sinners, one and all,
Come, ye all have invitation;
Come, obey His gracious call,
Come and take His free salvation!
Firmly in these words believe:
"Jesus sinners doth receive!"

I, a sinner, come to Thee,
And acknowledge my transgression;
Tender mercy show to me,
Grant me graciously remission,
Let these words my soul relieve:
"Jesus sinners doth receive!"

Henceforth I need fear no foe;
Were as scarlet my transgression,
It shall be as white as snow
By the virtue of Thy Passion;
For in these words I believe:
"Jesus sinners doth receive!"

Now my conscience is at ease,
Now I fear no condemnation.
He who grants me full release
Hath atoned for my transgression;
In true faith to Him I cleave —
"Jesus sinners doth receive!"

ANOTHER PRAYER OF CONFESSION.

O Lord, Thou all-knowing God, from whom nothing is hid, Thou seest all that we men do, and hearest all that we speak. Alas! when I think of this, I have to be ashamed of having spoken, thought, and done so much evil. Alas! how much evil hast Thou heard and seen of me hitherto which gave Thee just cause to cast me away forever as a disobedient child and to cast me away utterly into hell. But, behold, I come before Thee in this season of grace; I am ashamed to lift up my eyes before

Thee and say: God, be merciful to me, a sinner. Oh, do not chasten me in Thy hot displeasure as I have deserved. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgression; according to Thy great mercy remember Thou me for Thy goodness' sake. Aye, for the sake of the blood and death of Jesus, have mercy upon me.

Lord, Lord, gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy, Thou wilt not keep Thine anger forever, but wilt again have mercy on me. Oh, deal not with me after my sins nor reward me according to mine iniquity. O God, Thou hast said that Thou hast no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but that he turn to Thee and live. Have mercy also on me, O God, whom I have provoked to anger. Behold me not in my sins, but behold me in Jesus, Thy Son, my only Savior, Mediator, and Redeemer. For the sake of the blood which He shed, have mercy on me; for the sake of His holy wounds, have mercy on me; for the sake of His perfect righteousness which I apprehend by faith, have mercy on me. Let me feel in my heart the consolation that my sins are forgiven me, that I am reconciled with Thee by Jesus, my Savior. By the power of Thy Holy Spirit I will amend my life; I will contemplate Thy most holy presence and reflect that whether I am going or standing still, or whatever I do, Thou art present and observest me. Let such thoughts never leave my heart.

My sin is very sore and great, I mourn beneath its dreadful load; O free me from this heavy weight, My Savior, through Thy precious blood; And with Thy Father for me plead That Thou hast suffered in my stead; From me the burden then is rolled. Lord, I lay hold On Thy dear promises of old. Amen.

HYMN.

Th' abyss of many a former sin
Encloses me, and bars me in;
Like billows my transgressions roll;—
Be Thou the Pilot of my soul;
And to salvation's harbor bring,
Thou Savior and Thou glorious King!

My Father's heritage abused,
Wasted by lust, by sin misused;
To shame and want and misery brought,
The slave to many a fruitless thought:—
I cry to Thee, who lovest men,
O pity and receive again!

In hunger now, no more possessed
Of that my portion bright and blest,
The exile and the alien see,
Who yet would fain return to Thee!
And save me, Lord, who seeks to raise
To Thy dear love the hymn of praise!

With that saved thief my prayer I make,
Remember for Thy mercy's sake!
With that poor publican I cry,
Be merciful, O God most high!
With that lost prodigal I fain
Back to my home would turn again!

Mourn, mourn, my soul, with earnest care,
And raise to Christ the contrite prayer:—
O Thou, who freely wast made poor,
My sorrows and my sins to cure,
Me, poor of all good works, embrace,
Enriching with Thy boundless grace!

The Believing Christian Prays when Taking the Lord's Supper.

EXHORTATION.

As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come. *1 Cor. 11, 26.*

Besides other means for strengthening faith and love towards God and our fellow-men there is the Holy Supper of our Lord, in which Jesus desires to unite with our souls, dwell in them, rule, sanctify, and keep them in godliness to the end. This Holy Supper, (1) a believing Christian does not despise and neglect, as nominal Christians are in the habit of doing, who are so distracted with their vanity, worldly pleasures, revenge, pride, and luxurious living that they are not able to think of this pledge of God to the soul. (2) Nor does a believing Christian go to the Lord's Supper from mere habit, but he approaches it with a humble, devout, and believing heart, filled with the good resolve to continue steadfastly in the love of Jesus and in the fear of God. (3) And he has also resolved, after taking the Holy Supper of the Lord, to yield himself entirely to his God, to become more godly, devout, and zealous day by day in his Christian conduct and in the exercise of Christian virtues by the power of this food of the soul, yea, to remain loyal unto death to God in faith and godliness.

PRAYER.

My Jesus, how can I sufficiently praise Thy great love, since Thou hast not only given Thyself into death for me, a poor sinner, but hast also ordained Thy holy body and Thy precious blood as food for my soul in the Holy Supper. O Love, Thy death brings me life, and Thy body and blood strengthen and refresh me unto the life everlasting. By this means I abide in Thee and Thou in me; Thou livest in me, and in Thee I obtain righteousness and strength. Therefore my sin cannot frighten me, and Satan cannot condemn me, for in this gracious feast I receive the ransom for my sins.

Here I receive the body that was given into death for me; here I receive the blood that was shed for me for the forgiveness of sin. This is the blood of atonement by which my sins and the sins of all men have been canceled. Now, as surely as I receive it, so surely God is merciful to me, and I have the forgiveness of all my sins. In Holy Baptism, the first Sacrament which I received, Thou hast given me the Holy Spirit for a pledge, and the new life, thus assuring me that I am Thy child and heir. In the Holy Supper, the second Sacrament, Thou givest me the pledge of Thy body and blood, to preserve and strengthen in me the new life.

O my God, sanctify my soul, strengthen my faith, that I may receive this feast of love worthily and for my salvation. Grant that my thoughts may always be with Thee; drive from my heart all sinful suggestions and desires and everything that might hinder my devotion, in order that Thou mayest abide in me, and I may be and abide in Thee to all eternity.

Jesus, Bread of Life, I pray Thee, Let me gladly here obey Thee, Never to my hurt invited, Be Thy love with love requited; From this banquet let me measure, Lord, how vast and deep love's treasure; Through the gifts Thou here dost give me As Thy guest in heaven receive me. Amen.

HYMN.

O living Bread from heaven,
How hast Thou fed Thy guest!
The gifts Thou now hast given
Have filled my heart with rest.
O wondrous Food of Blessing!
O cup that heals our woes!
My heart, this gift possessing,
In thankful song o'erflows.

My Lord, Thou here hast led me
Within Thy holiest place,
And there Thyself hast fed me
With treasures of Thy grace:
And Thou hast freely granted
What earth could never buy,
The Bread of Life from heaven,
That now I shall not die!

Thou gav'st the food I wanted,
Its power can death destroy;
And Thou hast freely granted
The cup of endless joy,
Ah, Lord, I do not merit
The favor Thou hast shown,
And all my soul and spirit
Bow down before Thy throne!

Lord, grant me that, thus strengthened
With heavenly food, while here
My course on earth is lengthened,
I serve with holy fear;
And when Thou call'st my spirit
To leave this world below,
I enter, through Thy merit,
Where joys unmingled flow.

ANOTHER PRAYER WHEN GOING TO THE LORD'S SUPPER.

O Jesus, now that I am to partake of Thy holy feast of love, I receive it also in remembrance of Thee. I remember Thy love, how for my sake Thou didst come into the world to make me an heir of life everlasting. I remember Thy anguish, pain, and wounds by which my sins and punishment have been removed from me and Thy righteousness has been bestowed upon me. I remember Thy death and Thy resurrection by which life and salvation has been imparted to me. I know, O Jesus, that for Thy sake I obtain grace, sonship, peace, and

heaven's joy. I shall not be lost if I abide in Thee, O Jesus, and Thou abidest in me.

O abide, then, in my heart, dwell in my heart, live and rule in it, let me be Thine in time and eternity. Let Thy holy body be my food, Thy holy blood my drink, and refresh me unto life eternal. Grant that I may never lose this treasure again, but that Thou, my Jesus, henceforth mayest live, rule, and dwell in me. Israel's manna had to be gathered in a clean vessel; oh, do Thou, then, purify my heart by true faith, genuine repentance, love, and humility, in order that I may worthily receive this pledge of Thy love and constantly keep it for the strengthening of my faith, the sanctification of my life, and the assurance of my salvation. O precious Holy Spirit, preserve me in this grace unto my blessed end. Guard me, lest I again sin wantonly and fall from grace, and my last estate be worse than the first; but until death let me continue in faith in the Triune God, in love toward my neighbor, and in godliness, that I may obtain the end of faith, the salvation of my soul.

Grant that I worthily receive Thy Supper, Lord my Savior, That for my sins I truly grieve, And prove by my behavior That I obtained Thy saving grace, And trust in it throughout my days; Then will my life be godly. Amen.

HYMN.

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ, my Lord,
All the vain things that charm me most
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet—
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all!

The Believing Christian Prays God to Give Him Strength to Resist Sin.

EXHORTATION.

Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. *Rom. 6, 12. 13.*

Sin is a departure from God, a transgression of the divine Law; it is the opposite of what is right. Now, a Christian does not willingly depart from God, nor transgress God's commandment, nor commit unrighteousness, but his desire is that Jesus should live in him and that the Holy Spirit should rule him. However, since he cannot at all times perfectly achieve this end, he must fight against sin.

This fight consists in the following: (1) The believing Christian knows that whoever is born of God does not commit sin, that is, not purposely, and willingly; accordingly, he is careful not to offend his God knowingly and intentionally. (2) However, since he is not satisfied with this, but would gladly consecrate, surrender, and devote his entire heart and soul, spirit and life to God, he is often grieved over a single sinful word which he has spoken; a wicked, sinful thought arising in him will sadden him, and he groans when he has by any act offended God or his fellow-man.

(3) In this fight he seeks refuge with Jesus Christ and prays for power and strength, that Jesus would aid him to overcome sin and the world. (4) He must not only increase the fervor of his prayer, but pay ever stricter attention to the lusts and thoughts

that arise in him, and also shun the places and persons that might lead him into sin. (5) In this way he can rest assured, since he is in a state of sanctification and has a desire to serve God with all his heart and all his soul and all his strength, that God, who has wrought in him the will to do, will also grant him the power to accomplish God's will; that Jesus will cover up his defects and faults with His blood, yea, will be well pleased with his heartfelt desire.

PRAYER.

Strong and almighty God, who knowest what is in man, Thou seest, alas! in what violent struggle I am engaged against sin. I would gladly be and remain godly with all my heart, no longer provoke Thee to anger, order my life according to Thy holy Word, and perform Thy holy will alone; but I feel another law in my members which is warring against the law of my mind. When I think that I have at last planted my feet firmly upon a good resolution, I am often made to experience that pride, self-will, self-esteem, envy, and prejudice against my fellow-man manifest themselves in me, that sinful thoughts find their way into my heart, yea, that I am also sinning by thoughtless words and unbecoming actions.

Alas, I am grieved over my being so full of uncleanness; cleanse Thou me, O Lord, and I shall be clean. In Thy light and by Thy grace I perceive that to do sin is a great evil, my ruin, and my plague, from which I would gladly be delivered. Therefore I struggle against it in Thy strength, and still I am sometimes overcome. However, it is just this miserable condition that grieves me: what is finally to become of me if I am now godly, now wicked, and my godliness has no permanency?

Thou seest, indeed, my God, how I am shocked

at myself, but am unable to help myself by my own strength. Therefore I come to Thee and pray Thee to forgive me all my past sins and imperfections; and then give me strength to fight against sin. Let Thy Holy Spirit dwell in me and cleanse my heart. When I am about to become angry, vindictive, proud, let Him admonish me, calling to me in such moments and saying: Remember, you are a Christian; remember, you are a child of God, or wish to pass for a child of God! in order that I may become meek, humble, and godly. Lord, Thou hast wrought in me to will; give me also the grace to do. Strengthen me in the inner man, that in Thy might I may lay aside one sin after the other and rule over them. Increase my strength that I may overcome the world within and without me. Ah, I can do all things through Him that strengtheneth me, Christ.

In the world will foes assail me, Crafty, stronger far than I;
And the strife will never fail me, Well I know, before I die. Therefore, Lord, I come, believing Thou canst give the power I need,
Through the prayer of faith receiving Strength — the Spirit's strength, indeed. Amen.

HYMN.

Fight the good fight
With all thy might;
Christ is thy Strength, and Christ thy Right:
Lay hold on life, and it shall be
Thy joy and crown eternally.

Run the straight race
Through God's good grace,
Lift up thine eyes, and seek His face;
Life with its way before us lies,
Christ is the Path, and Christ the Prize.

Cast care aside;
Upon thy Guide
Lean, and His mercy will provide;
Lean, and the trusting soul shall prove
Christ is its life and Christ its love.

Faint not, nor fear,
His arms are near;
He changeth not, and thou art dear;
Only believe, and thou shalt see
That Christ is all in all to thee.

The Believing Christian Desires to Offer Himself as a Sacrifice to God.

EXHORTATION.

I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. *Rom. 12, 1.*

Every Christian is to remind himself continually that we are not our own, but God's. This should encourage us to give ourselves and all that we possess back to God as a sacrifice.

The sacrifices of the Old Testament which were to meet with God's favor had to be (1) voluntary offerings. A person is not to lead a godly life in this world from fear of punishment or hell, but from love of God; otherwise his offering is a forced offering. Nay, even if there were no hell, a Christian from love would still yield himself to God as His own. (2) The sacrifices had to be offered to God entire, with head, entrails, and limbs, and could not be offered half. Accordingly, we should not give half of our heart to the world and half to God, but should love Him and give ourselves to Him with all our heart and all our soul and all our strength. A half-hearted, divided service God rejects. (3) The sacrifices had to be entirely without blemish; hence nothing lame or blind could be offered to God. Accordingly, we must be careful not to pollute our soul and body with sin, but strive to place both entirely at His service. (4) God took a particular pleasure in sacrifices that were still young, in lambs a year or two years old, thus indicating to us that we are not to wait with our conversion till we are hoary with age, but are to yield ourselves betimes, in

the budding days of our youth, as a sacrifice to Him. (5) What had once been offered to God could not be exchanged or withdrawn. Thus a Christian must be steadfast in his good resolve to yield himself to God as His own.

PRAYER.

Lord, Lord God, who didst command Thy people Israel to bring Thee daily offerings which had to be entirely consecrated and surrendered to Thee, behold, I bring to Thee my believing and penitent heart; that Thou wilt not despise.

Heavenly Father, Thou hast created me that I should be Thine own. Dearest Jesus, Thou hast redeemed me with Thy blood, that I should live in Thy kingdom and serve Thee in holiness and righteousness. O precious Holy Spirit, Thou hast sanctified me that I should be Thy dwelling-place, and that Christ should live in me. Oh, then, I shall in turn make an offering of my entire self and dedicate myself to Thee. I offer up to Thee my will; no longer do I want to accomplish what I will, but what Thou wilt. I offer up to Thee my mouth, with which I shall praise and magnify Thee, and which I shall never misuse for filthiness and foolish talking. I offer up to Thee my heart; fill it with a living faith, with Thy grace, with Thy love, with true godliness.

Of every sacrifice the fatty portions in particular had to be offered to Thee; yea, without these no offering would have been acceptable to Thee. Be pleased, then, to receive also my offering. If this is a heart unclean by nature and unfit for an offering, oh, wash it with the blood of Jesus Christ which I accept in true faith; cleanse it with Thy Holy Spirit, hallow it, and make it a dwelling-place unto Thee, that Thou mayest govern and reign

therein. I offer up to Thee my life; I shall order it in accordance with Thy holy Word and the prompting of Thy Holy Spirit. I offer up to Thee my members; grant that they may become instruments of righteousness, that I may not misuse them for sin and shame, but that they may remain consecrated to Thee.

As that which was offered had to be kept apart from all else, so I will gladly separate myself from this sinful world and stay away from its society. Aye, I will offer myself up to Thee while I am still living and in good health, and will not wait until I am lying on my bed of sickness; for then it might be too late. O Lord, Thou didst accept offerings at all times, in the morning, at noon, and in the evening; graciously look also upon my offering. I may be bringing it to Thee at the noontide of my life, or it may be that my life's eventide has already arrived; if I have delayed my offering during life's morning and in my youth, Thou wilt not on that account despise it. I am bringing it to Thee like Abel, in faith; look upon it according to Thy mercy. For the remainder of my life I shall remain Thine own.

Lord, Thou Fount of joy forever, Thou art mine, I am Thine, No one can us sever. I am Thine because Thou gavest Life and blood For my good, By Thy death me savest. Thou art mine, I love and own Thee, Ne'er shall I, Light of joy, From my heart dethrone Thee. Let me, let me soon behold Thee Face to face, Thy embrace — May it soon enfold me! Amen.

HYMN.

Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love;
Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only, for my King;
Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store;
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.

The Believing Christian Prays for Godliness.

EXHORTATION.

Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace. Ps. 37, 37.

Godliness is an ornament to the young and becoming to the old. God Himself exhorts Abraham when journeying to a strange land: "Walk before Me, and be thou perfect." Gen. 17, 1. However, to be godly (1) outward morality is not sufficient; for that is found even among pagans; but godliness springs from faith, from the love of God, and from the inmost soul. (2) Such godliness embraces, first, sincerity and uprightness of heart toward God and our fellow-men; next: blamelessness of life, abstaining from indecent talk and unchristian works; for when these things are still found in a person, we cannot say that he is godly. (3) Moreover, this godliness is to continue till death. It is not sufficient to be

godly two or three days, when we want to go to the Lord's Supper, but we must make our own the resolution of Job, who declared: "Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me." Job 27, 5.

(4) Now, inasmuch as this godliness is wrought in us by the Spirit of God, it has the most glorious and beautiful promises, namely, of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

PRAYER.

Holy God, I hardly know whether I dare to appear before Thy holy countenance when I reflect upon my natural unholiness and my sinful nature. Also to me Thou art calling: "Walk before Me and be thou perfect," and: "If thou doest well, thou shalt be accepted"; yea, Thou sayest also to me: "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." But, alas! my godliness has as yet not proceeded far; I have, alas! been still enmeshed in the world, its ways, its habits, its vanities. But wherever the world and its sinful ways still intrude themselves, Christ and the love of Him cannot be properly formed in us.

However, since this is displeasing to Thee, and since, on the contrary, Thou sayest to Thy children: "Be not conformed to the world," therefore grant me the grace utterly to renounce the world and its ways. Give me a truly godly heart. Help me to be godly with all my heart, in order that my Christian profession may be sincere and upright, not eyeservice and hypocrisy. Grant me grace that I may be zealous unto genuine godliness, not only for appearance' sake and outwardly, but let my godliness take its beginning in the heart, that I may love Thee above all else, serve Thee, and accomplish what is well-pleasing to Thee. Yea, as a godly child, before undertaking anything, looks at his parents to

read permission in their eyes, so let me look first into Thy holy Word and commandment to ascertain whether what I purpose is becoming me as a godly Christian. Then, if my heart is godly, my mouth too, will become godly, so as to speak nothing that is indecent; yea, then, also my works and actions will be well-pleasing to Thee.

Now, I have formed this resolution in Thy name, my God; give me grace, ability, strength, and mercy to carry it out. If in the years past I have not always striven for this prize, forgive me for Christ's sake. Whatever I have neglected to do from ignorance or blindness, I shall now supply with all the greater zeal, and shall henceforth live, not according to the lusts of men, but according to Thy will. Thus I propose, my God, to become and to remain godly with all my heart and throughout my life, so as to be able at the appointed time as a godly Christian to die a blessed death. To this end grant me from on high the power of Thy Holy Spirit, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Create in me a new heart, Lord, That gladly I obey Thy Word,
And naught but what Thou wilt, desire; With such new life my
soul inspire. Grant that I only Thee may love, And seek those
things which are above, Till I behold Thee face to face, O Light
eternal, through Thy grace. Amen.

HYMN.

Lord, hear the voice of my complaint,
To Thee I now commend me,
Let not my heart and hope grow faint,
But deign Thy grace to send me.
True faith from Thee, my God, I seek,
The faith that loves Thee solely,
Keeps me lowly,
And prompt to aid the weak,
And mark each word that Thou dost speak.

Yet more from Thee I dare to claim,
Whose goodness is unbounded;
O let me ne'er be put to shame,
My hope be ne'er confounded;
But e'en in death still find Thee true,
And in that hour else lonely,
Trust Thee only,
Not aught that I can do,
For such false trust I sore should rue.

O grant that from my very heart
My foes be all forgiven,
Forgive my sins and heal their smart,
And grant new life from heaven;
Thy Word, that blessed food, bestow,
Which best the soul can nourish;
Make it flourish
Through all the storms of woe
That else my faith might overthrow.

Then be the world my foe or friend,
Keep me to her a stranger,
Thy steadfast follower to the end,
Through pleasure and through danger;
From Thee alone comes such high grace,
No works of ours obtain it
Or can gain it;
Our pride hath here no place—
This Thy free promise we embrace.

Help me, for I am weak; I fight,
Yet scarce can battle longer;
I cling but to Thy grace and might,
'Tis Thou canst make me stronger;
When sore temptations are my lot,
And tempests round me lower,
Break the power:
So, through deliverance wrought,
I know that Thou forsak'st me not.

The Believing Christian Prays for an Unsullied Conscience.

EXHORTATION.

Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. *2 Cor. 1, 12.*

Most men are concerned about their body, to keep it in good health. They exert themselves greatly to acquire or to keep their possessions. Would to God that they would also put forth such great efforts to keep their conscience pure and unspotted!

The conscience is like the eye, which cannot endure a speck of dust. To a wicked person it is his accuser, witness, and judge; yea, the remembrance of sin remains in the conscience like scars in the face. On the last day God and the conscience will be witnesses whom nobody will be able to gainsay. Accordingly, the Judgment will not take a long time, because these witnesses cannot be contradicted.

A believing Christian will retain an unsullied conscience, (1) if he diligently hears and reads God's Word and orders his life accordingly, considering in all that he proposes to say or do whether God in His holy Word permits it; (2) if he avoids sinful associations and occasions; for as a person handling fire and water is easily burned or becomes wet, so the conscience is easily violated in persons who walk carelessly. (3) In particular, the conscience is guarded by devout, earnest prayer to God, that He would lead and guide us, and by His grace and power keep us on the right course, and by the reflection that God is omnipresent, and that we are always walking in His sight.

PRAYER.

O Lord, my God, how great is Thy goodness and love which Thou dost manifest towards us! Thou givest us life and health, and prosperest us according to Thy mercy. O my God, all these things are presents and gifts from Thee, but they will become bitter like wormwood to us if in our healthy body,

and joined to all our gifts and possessions, there is not an unsullied conscience.

Therefore, O my God, have mercy on me and keep me in Thy fear, lest I violate my conscience. The conscience is like the eye, which becomes irritated, moist, and inflamed, and cannot readily be opened if the least little speck of dust enters it; the same happens to our conscience: if we have done anything contrary to it, it becomes restless, it accuses and condemns us, and when it is thoroughly aroused, we have not the courage to lift our eyes to heaven.

O my God, I desire greatly to bring before Thy holy countenance an inviolate soul and a pure conscience; therefore, rule me by Thy Holy Spirit that I may be as careful with my conscience as with my eyes. What a precious treasure is a good conscience! O my God, let me guard this treasure well! Help me that I may never speak what might cause me pangs of conscience. Help me that I may never consent to a sin in word or wicked deed by which a grievous burden would be placed on my soul which would weigh me down either throughout my life or on my dying bed, or rouse Thy anger and vengeance against me.

Preserve me from remorse of conscience and its anguish, and lest I should have to undergo these, grant me the grace that I may everywhere conduct myself in a cautious and Christian manner. Grant that I may always reflect upon Thy most holy presence, be afraid to do evil in Thy sight, and remember that Thou art a discernor of hearts from whom nothing is hidden. And since I cannot hide myself

from my conscience, but have to feel its smiting the moment I do evil, let me reflect that I shall be still less able to hide from Thee, O all-seeing and all-knowing God.

Grant that I may look unto Jesus, my Savior, and walk in His footsteps. Grant that I may never suffer Thy Word, my rule of faith, to depart from my mouth, lest by denying my faith, I wound my conscience. Let Thy Word be also my rule of life, that I may not purposely sin against it, but govern all my actions by it. O Lord Jesus, cleanse my conscience with Thy holy blood, forgive me all my sins, and bestow on me the quiet, true rest of heart and conscience. Oh, let Thy Holy Spirit ever lead me in a plain path, and my conscience shall remain inviolate and Thy dwelling-place in my heart undisturbed.

O God, Thou faithful God, Thou Fount that ever flowest; Without whom nothing is, Who all good gifts bestowest, A pure and healthy frame O give me, and within A conscience free from blame, A soul unhurt by sin. Amen.

HYMN.

God of my life, whose gracious power
Through various deaths my soul hath led;
Or turned aside the fatal hour,
Or lifted up my sinking head.

In all my ways Thy hand I own
Thy ruling Providence I see;
O help me still my course to run,
And still direct my path to Thee.

Whither, O whither should I fly
But to my loving Savior's breast?
Secure within Thine arms to lie,
And safe beneath Thy wings to rest!

I have no skill the snare to shun,
But Thou, O Christ, my Wisdom art!
I ever into ruin run;
But Thou art greater than my heart.

Foolish, and impotent, and blind,
Lead me a way I have not known;
Bring me where I my heaven may find,
The heaven of loving Thee alone.

Enlarge my heart to make Thee room;
Enter, and in me ever stay:
The crooked then shall straight become;
The darkness shall be lost in day.

Believing Parents Commend Their Children to God in Prayer.

EXHORTATION.

Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. *Eph. 6, 4.*

If there is any concern that lies close to the heart of godly parents, it is their children. And rightly so; for children are precious pledges which God will demand at the hands of the parents.

Now, if godly parents ponder this fact, they will (1) earnestly commend their children to God in prayer before they are born, and later they will bring their children with them when they come before God. Godly parents pray in particular that God would give their children a pious heart and the Holy Spirit, who is to sanctify, govern, and guide them. This is the true foundation of their happiness; compared with this, wealth, skill, and prudence are to be deemed nothing.

(2) Parents, however, should not only pray for their children, but should also bring them up in the fear of God. This makes it necessary that they do not let them have their own will; because the children's will is by nature perverse, and their imagination and desire are evil from their youth. They must rather instruct them in the knowledge of God, train them to prayer and a Christian

conduct, and not give them permission to go into the society of evil and vain men. For if they permit this, their prayer is in vain; yea, they mock God with their prayer.

(3) Neglect in the training of their children entails upon the parents a heavy responsibility before God, because God will require the blood of their neglected children at their hands. Such neglect also brings shame and disgrace upon the parents, because their children will not be an honor, but a reproach to them, sometimes already in this life, but at any rate after their death. Neglect in the training of children also brings the anger of God upon the parents, as may be seen from 1 Sam. 2, 29; 4, 18. (4) Negligent parents bring themselves and their children into hell, and thus have done them no kindness by their indulgence.

PRAYER.

Lord, almighty God, Father of mercies, amongst other gifts of Thy grace Thou hast given me children, for which blessing I heartily praise and magnify Thee. However, I regard these children of mine as precious pledges, which Thou hast entrusted to me and wilt require at my hand. I regard them as souls that Jesus has purchased with His holy blood, the Holy Spirit has sanctified in Holy Baptism, and Thou hast adopted as Thy children. I am, therefore, concerned lest one of them be lost through my fault. Thou sayest to me and all parents: Take care of this child; if it is missed, thy soul shall answer for its soul.

Therefore, O Father of all grace, I come to Thee and in heartfelt prayer commend to Thee my children. I will do what I can: I will bring them up for Thy honor, admonish them, correct them, instruct them, and pray for them. But, O Lord, Lord, in all my efforts do Thou perform the most efficient part. Immediately after their natural birth

I placed them into the arms of Thy mercy in Holy Baptism. Behold, I now do the same in my prayer. Bless my children; attend them at their going out and coming in; keep them in Thy holy fear, that they may never burden their conscience with sins, may not offend Thee, nor, worst of all, fall from Thy grace. Give them a believing, humble, obedient, and godly heart, that, like the child Jesus, they may increase in stature, wisdom, and favor with God and men. Imprint upon their hearts the image of Jesus, in order that they may ever keep, until their blessed end, a gracious God and an unstained conscience.

Let my children be devout at their prayers, well grounded in their Christian religion, steadfast in faith, zealous in worship, chaste in their living, godly in their conversation, in order that by their words and acts they may give offense to no one and thus bring upon themselves a fearful judgment. Preserve them from temptations and evil company; by Thy Holy Spirit keep them constantly in mind of Thy most holy presence, in order that they may remember that Thou art with them at home and abroad, in the chamber, by day and by night, in society and in solitude. Let Thy angel be with them when they go out and when they come in; let Thy angel guard them when they are traveling, pursuing their business, or sojourning in foreign parts. Give them Thy holy angels as companions, as Thou didst to young Tobit; by their aid rescue them from dangers, as Thou didst Lot; let them, like Jacob, experience the angels' watch and ward.

But if it should please Thee to make my children a cross to me, either by their sickness, or death,

or any other calamity which I might have to see them suffer, grant me patience in such an affliction, and put me in mind that nothing happens without Thy divine direction, that my children were Thine before they became mine, and that Thou hast sovereign power to take them again to Thyself. But if it be Thy design by the suffering, misfortune, and death of my children to draw me unto Thee, in order that I may recognize also in them the perishableness of visible gifts, and thus to stir me up to love Thee alone, the true and perfect Good, keep me while traveling this thorny path in firm confidence and hope in Thy almighty power, which can end and mend all things, also the crosses of my children.

Impart Thy blessing to them also in their temporal affairs; care for them, provide for them, give them food and raiment, and deal with them as their mighty heavenly Father; be their Helper in dangers and calamities, their Physician in sickness, and their Counselor whenever they are in need of good advice. Give to my children a pious soul, a healthy body, and a sound mind, and let them live in Thy sight, in order that they may at all times honor and praise Thee. Implant in their hearts true godliness, continue Thy blessing upon them that I may have comfort and joy in them.

O God, hear my prayer, and remember that they are Thy children as well as mine. Therefore, be pleased to hear my supplication in their behalf at the throne of Thy grace. Preserve me, O God, from being brought to shame by my children, either during my lifetime or after my death. On the last day let me stand at Thy right hand with all my children

and say to the praise of Thy holy name: "Behold, here I am, my God, and the children which Thou hast given me; I have lost none of them." Aye, my God, grant me Thy divine favor to this end, that none of my children may be lost, but that they may all enter with me, and I with them, into Thy glory.

Shine in our hearts, O most precious Light, That we Jesus Christ may know aright, Clinging to our Savior, whose blood has bought us, Who again to our true home has brought us. Lord, have mercy! Amen.

GOOD SHEPHERD, KEEP THIS LITTLE FLOCK.

Good Shepherd, keep this little flock,
Find out for them some sheltering rock;
The wilderness is wide, O lead
To some green spot where they may feed;
Let them on quiet waters look,
And quench their thirst at some clear brook.
Lambs are but weak, and if a road
All rough and thorny must be trod;
If weary seems the way and long,
O Thou, Good Shepherd, who art strong,
Bear them at need in Thine own arm,
And in Thy bosom fold them warm.
If ever they should from Thee stray,
Let them not roam too far away;
Seek them, Good Shepherd, and restore
Them safely to Thy fold once more.
Lead them, O Lord, while life shall last,
And when through death's dark vale they've
passed,
Grant them in Thy great fold to dwell
In heaven above, where all is well.

Godly Children Pray for Their Parents.

EXHORTATION.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise, That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. *Eph. 6, 1—3.*

With other grievous sins by which a person can bring a curse upon himself must also be the misbehavior of some grown-up children toward their parents. Although parents from the first hour of their children's birth endure care, trouble, and vexation on their account, yet their keenest grief is when the children are obstinate, domineering, perverse, and malicious towards them in their later years, while, on the contrary, they ought to cause their parents nothing but joy and delight.

Pious children, therefore, should (1) pray diligently for their parents, and in their prayers beseech the Lord to grant them blessings without number, health, prosperity, and long life, and keep them from every misfortune. Pious children should (2) love their parents, gladly do everything they can for them, be willing and prompt in giving them what they need, and care for them and nurse them when they are sick. Pious children should (3) obey their parents, submit to their training with a good will, and not contradict them nor dispute their orders and commands. Moreover, when they wish to enter the state of matrimony, they should not become engaged secretly, without their parents' knowledge and consent, because that would bring nothing but curse and misfortune upon them. Pious children should (4) honor their parents in their hearts, namely, by recognizing them as occupying God's place, since God gives everything to children through their parents. They should also conduct themselves reverently in their presence both in speech and action, not hurl unkind and harsh words at them, and defend their honor and good name. Pious children should (5) bear in mind that they can never repay all that their parents have done for them. Remember what anguish you have caused your mother, and with what toil and labor your father had to bring you up and support you. (6) Ungrateful and obstinate children are veritable children of Belial, and it can never be well with them if they do not mourn over the sins and acts of malice which they have committed against their parents with heartfelt, genuine repentance and rueful tears.

PRAYER.

O gracious and merciful God, I praise Thee from my inmost heart for the grace vouchsafed me that I was born of pious, Christian parents. That is the first divine favor Thou hast shown me. If my parents had been Jews, Turks, or pagans, I would still be as hardened, unbelieving, and without knowledge of Thee as they. As it was my parents' first concern after my natural birth that I be placed into Thy arms, my heavenly Father, through Holy Baptism, in which Thou hast given me the Holy Spirit as a pledge of my sonship and of my heavenly heritage, so let this good Spirit evermore lead and guide me that I may diligently observe my duties towards Thee and my parents.

I prostrate myself in prayer before Thy most holy countenance and beseech Thee: Keep my parents in good health, preserve them from misfortune, bless their business, their labor, and their profession, grant them a long life, recompense them with spiritual and heavenly blessings for the faithfulness which they have shown me, and which I cannot recount nor ever requite.

Give me an obedient heart, O heavenly Father, that I may not offend my parents, or knowingly and wilfully grieve them. Grant that I may at all times place before my eyes the example of my Jesus, who not only was obedient to Thee, His heavenly Father, but also to His foster-father Joseph and to His mother Mary, in order that by filial obedience I may at all times, and also in their old age, cause nothing but joy and delight to my parents. Guard me, lest by disobedience and obstinacy I bring upon myself

the curse and unhappiness with which wicked children have been threatened; but let it be well with me here in time and hereafter in eternity. Give me a heart that is respectful toward them, that neither by words nor acts I may provoke them to anger, but conduct myself towards them with humility, cheerfully heed their commands, and submit to their chastisement without contradiction. Keep me from becoming like the perverse, wicked children, who insult and despise their parents, and cause them nothing but grief and vexation, and who will bring a curse down upon themselves, and be deprived forever of the blessing which Thou hast promised to pious and good children. Grant me grace not to sin against my parents, but to ponder diligently what care I have caused my mother, and with what toil I have been brought up, in order that I may acknowledge this throughout my life with a grateful heart and mind, and cause my parents no disgrace, on the contrary, nothing but joy.

If in the years of my childhood I have done anything against my parents, I humbly ask pardon now, O God, of Thee and of my parents, and promise that by Thy grace I will strive to rejoice their heart with my obedience and Christian conduct. Grant me Thy Holy Spirit that I may walk as becomes a child of God, in faith, godliness, chastity, and the fear of God, so that on the last day I may with my parents stand at Thy right hand and enter with them into Thy glory.

Give to thy parents honor due, Be dutiful, and loving too, And help them when their strength decays, So shalt thou have length of days. Have mercy, Lord! Amen.

HYMN.

Savior, teach me day by day
Love's sweet lesson to obey;
Sweeter lesson cannot be,
Loving Him who first loved me.

With a childlike heart of love
At Thy bidding may I move;
Prompt to serve and follow Thee,
Loving Him who first loved me.

Teach me all Thy steps to trace,
Strong to follow in Thy grace;
Learning how to love from Thee,
Loving Him who first loved me.

Love in loving finds employ,
In obedience all her joy;
Ever new that joy will be,
Loving Him who first loved me.

Thus may I rejoice to show
That I feel the love I owe;
Singing, till Thy face I see,
Of His love who first loved me.

BOOK II.

For the Use of the Afflicted.

The Afflicted Person Takes Comfort in the Omnipotence of God.

EXHORTATION.

Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.

Is. 41, 10.

If there is anything that can lift up an afflicted soul, it is certainly the omnipotence of our gracious God; for this is the afflicted person's anchor, to which he clings by reflecting (1) that with God nothing is impossible. No misery is so great but that God can deliver from it; no burden is so heavy but that He can remove it; no misfortune is so severe but that He can change it. (2) The afflicted person should consider that others have borne much heavier burdens, and that God has delivered them nevertheless. He should therefore say with joy: O God, Thou art as strong to-day as Thou hast ever been; my trust is entirely in Thee.

(3) Afflicted persons should remind themselves that God's omnipotence knows no bounds, and should therefore not become disheartened, even though they do not see how and by what means and in what manner they can be helped; for all this they should leave to the wisdom, goodness, and faithfulness of God. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord." Is. 55, 8. This reflection should strengthen the confidence and hope of the afflicted because he knows that God is able and willing to help him. He should therefore be still, hope, pray, trust in God, patiently bear his affliction, and cheerfully lift his eyes to heaven, saying: "My help cometh from the Lord who made heaven and earth." Ps. 121, 2.

PRAYER.

O good and kind God, Thou knowest and seest how my heart is afflicted; there lies upon it a heavy stone which I cannot roll away, a hard load which I can scarcely bear. Therefore I come to Thee, O almighty God; I pour out my soul before Thee, who art my Confidence; I cast my burden from myself upon Thee, and pray Thee to provide for me, to deliver me, and to assist me. The little bark tossed by the waves clings to the anchor, and I cling to Thee, Thou living and mighty God. The hunted game hastens to the mountains, and I lift up my eyes to Thee, my Rock, my Deliverer, and mighty Defender. I will not lose heart; I know that Thou art an almighty God; Thou canst help; nothing is impossible with Thee. Therefore, O Lord, help me, and I shall be helped; speak but one word, and my affliction shall pass away, and I shall obtain help.

O my God, I know that Thou art merciful; therefore have mercy on me in my misery. Thou knowest my pain, Thou art acquainted with my heart; since Thou hast laid this burden upon me, help me also to bear it. I know that Thou art a wise God; Thou wilt find ways and means still unknown to me. Oh, point out to me some little well of comfort as to weeping Hagar of old; assure me of Thy help as Thou didst the afflicted widow of old; help me as of old Thou didst forsaken Elisha, and manifest Thy great goodness towards me as Thou didst to Peter in prison. Let the bonds of my misery and distress drop from my heart. Let the light of Thy joy arise in me, bringing me Thy assurance: "I will not leave thee nor forsake thee; for a small moment

have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee."

I know that Thou art a faithful God who hast not forsaken any one that called upon Thee, and hence Thou wilt not forsake me. O Lord, my God, behold a wretched and helpless soul lying here before Thy throne of grace; send me help from the sanctuary and strengthen me out of Zion. Lord, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me. My God and Father, if Thou dost not help me, who shall? I was cast upon Thee from the womb; then Thou didst take me into the arms of Thy unwearied mercy and hast carried me hitherto. Oh, then, let me there find help now. I shall cry after Thee until Thou sayest: Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.

I rest me here Without a fear; By Thee shall all be given
That I can need, O Friend indeed, For this life or for heaven.
O make me true, My heart renew, My soul and flesh deliver! Lord,
hear my prayer, And in Thy care Keep me in peace forever. Amen.

HYMN.

Commit whatever grieves thee	Thy grace that ever floweth,
At heart and all thy ways,	O Father, what is good,
To Him who never leaves thee,	Or evil, ever knoweth,
On whom creation stays.	To mortal flesh and blood.
Who freest courses maketh	What to Thine eye all-seeing,
For clouds, and air, and wind,	And to Thy counsel wise
And who care ever taketh	Seems good must into being,
A path for thee to find.	O mighty Prince, arise!
The Lord thou must repose on	For means it fails Thee never,
If thou wouldst prosper sure,	Thou always findest a way,
His work must ever gaze on	Thy deeds are blessing ever,
If thine is to endure.	Thy path like brightest day.
By anxious care and grieving.	Thy work can no one hinder,
By self-consuming pain,	Thy labor cannot rest,
God is not moved to giving;	If Thou design'st Thy tender
By prayer must thou obtain.	Children should all be blessed.

Though all the power of evil	Hope on, thou heart, grief-riven,
Should rise up to resist,	Hope, and courageous be,
Without a doubt or cavil	Where anguish thee had driven
God never will desist;	Thou shalt deliverance see
His undertakings ever	God from Thy pit of sadness
At length He carries through;	Shall raise thee graciously:
What He designs He never	Wait, and the sun of gladness
Can fail at all to do.	Thine eyes shall early see.

The Afflicted Person Takes Comfort in the Love of God.

EXHORTATION.

For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer. *Is. 54, 7. 8.*

To an afflicted soul in its sadness, trials, and sufferings, nothing more cheering can happen or be said than this, that for Christ's sake it is loved by God nevertheless.

Under a grievous cross the first thought suggested to us by Satan and our flesh is this: God is your enemy; He has ceased loving you; for if He loved you, He would never afflict you thus and hide His gracious face from you. To such a thought, however, the afflicted person should not lend his ear, but should set up against it the everlasting love of God, who does not forsake His children, and should remind himself of these facts: (1) that to live in tribulations and sorrow, and to be a child of God nevertheless, is quite compatible; for Christ, the beloved Son of God, suffered tribulation enough, and yet remained the Son of God. (2) The afflicted person should ponder that God still loves those whom He suffers to be subjected to great sorrow, trials, and crosses. A father remains a father whether he caresses his child or chastises it with the rod.

Add to this, (3) that such a cross is not sent to the afflicted soul out of anger, nor for its ruin or harm, but that the soul may learn all the more God's goodness, omnipotence, faithfulness, and wisdom. (4) This love of God is very busy even while the cross

endures: it supports the afflicted, it preserves them, strengthens them, blesses them; at times they are refreshed and gladdened in a wonderful way; their burden is lightened, — all of which are proofs of God's love.

PRAYER.

The Lord is on my side, therefore I will not be afraid. Thou art my Shelter, my Rock, my Fortress, and my Deliverance—thus I sigh, my God, in my present affliction and anguish of soul. O Lord, Lord, Thou knowest full well how stricken my heart is, how full of suffering and pain I am. But I also know that this distress will not crush me if Thou art with me. Do not hide Thy face from me any longer; I am full of anxiety; give me relief. Thou hast shown me much love and goodness from the days of my youth; oh, embrace me with Thy love also in the present distress of my soul. A sheep, when pursued, flees to its shepherd; a child, when terrified, to his father. Therefore, I, too, come to Thee, my Shepherd and my Father.

O great God, Thou hast promised me Thy aid, saying: I am with thee in thy distress; I will rescue thee. Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not discouraged, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness; I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Now, then, O great God, I am in need of help; be at my side now; do not go away from me now; do not forsake me now.

I know that I am not forsaken; Thy love is so tender that Thou must have mercy upon me. Thou hast loved me with an everlasting love, and with loving-kindness Thou hast drawn me. Embrace me now with the arms of Thy love; hold me, lest I sink;

refresh me in my suffering; make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice. Give me beauty for sackcloth and ashes, and turn my sorrow into joy. Manifest also in me Thy love and goodness which others have in so many ways extolled, that with them I may praise Thy great name. O Thou God of love, seal in my heart the assurance that, as little as a father can forget his child, Thou hast forgotten me. Faithful Father, behold, Thy child is in sorrow, gladden it; it is full of anxiety, have mercy on it and help it for Jesus' sake.

My sins assail me sore, But I despair no more; I build on Christ who loves me, From this Rock nothing moves me; To Him I all surrender, To Him, my soul's Defender. Amen.

HYMN.

God is love; His mercy brightens
All the path in which we rove;
Bliss He wakes, and woe He lightens:
God is wisdom, God is love.

Chance and change are busy ever,
Man decays, and ages move:
But His mercy waneth never:
God is wisdom, God is love.

E'en the hour that darkest seemeth
Will His changeless goodness prove;
From the gloom His brightness streameth:
God is wisdom, God is love.

He with earthly cares entwineth
Hope and comfort from above;
Everywhere His glory shineth:
God is wisdom, God is love.

The Afflicted Person Takes Comfort in God's Help.

EXHORTATION.

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. *Ps. 121, 1. 2.*

To be without help in suffering and distress is more grievous than the suffering itself. On the other hand, hoping for help and final deliverance lightens even the severest suffering.

Afflicted souls should sustain themselves (1) with the reflection that God can help, for with God nothing is impossible; nothing is too difficult, nothing too great for Him; He can help in every need and out of every need. (2) Afflicted persons should remember that God is willing to help them because of His glorious promises that He will be with them in their distress, that He will pluck them out of the net, that He will not leave them nor forsake them. (3) Afflicted persons should ponder the examples of others whom God has already helped. Indeed, others may have been more wretched, sadder, more forsaken, and more miserable than they; and yet the Lord has helped these miserable people. Why, then, should we cast away our hope?

(4) For the help of God afflicted persons should watch amid prayer and supplication, hoping and trusting, and should finally believe that His help will not fail them; for what the Lord promises He surely performs. Let His Word be surer to you than anything; and though your heart should say nay to your every hope, still be not dismayed. (5) Afflicted persons, indeed, do not see how they can be helped, but they should bear in mind that God can do abundantly above all that we ask or think, and that He Himself will be their Helper, their Father, their Comforter, their Deliverer, their Succor. Having God, then, they have everything. (6) Yea, they should allow time to assuage their sorrow; for this, too, is a blessing of God, that He alleviates our suffering by making us forget it in the course of time.

PRAYER.

When I am afflicted, I think of God. Whither else shall I turn, of whom else shall I think in the sorrow and grief of my heart, than of Thee alone, my God? Thou hast never yet suffered me to go

away sorrowful from Thy most holy presence. Therefore, hear also now my prayer for Christ's sake; give ear to my crying, my King and my God, and when I call, be not silent, but hear me speedily.

By Thy hand the affliction which I suffer was sent me; Thou canst deliver me from it according to Thy mercy. Lord, Lord, Thou killest and makest alive; Thou bringest down to hell and up again. Thou, Lord, makest poor and makest rich; Thou humblest and liftest up. Thou raisest up the poor out of the dust, and liftest up the beggar from his hovel. Therefore I say in faith, Lord, help me. Thou canst help; for Thou art an almighty God; Thou art willing to help; for Thou hast promised to do so. Father, wilt Thou forsake Thy child? My Father, canst Thou endure the cries of Thy child and not come to his aid? Thou hast said: "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." "My bowels are troubled for thee; I will surely have mercy upon thee." Oh, hear me also at this time; hear the cry of my heart and the wail of my lips.

Yet I know, my Father, that Thou hearest me at all times; therefore I will not prescribe to Thee the day and the hour when Thou art to help. I will cheerfully abide Thy hour for helping me; meanwhile strengthen my faith, my hope, my confidence; give me patience and strength to bear my affliction, and at last let me behold the day when Thou wilt gladden me with Thy mercy. O my Father, Thou hast never yet forsaken any one; do not forsake me either. Thou hast at all times gladdened the afflicted; gladden me also. Thou hast helped the distressed; help me also. When, where, and how

Thou art going to do this, I herewith leave entirely to Thy wisdom, love, goodness, and mercy. Be content, then, my soul; why art thou cast down and disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him who is the Help of my countenance and my God.

Help, Helper, help in fear and need, Have mercy, to my prayer give heed! I know Thou lov'st me still as Thine, Though 'gainst me world and hell combine. My God and Lord, I trust in Thee; What need I, if Thou art with me? And Thou, Lord Jesus Christ, art mine; My God and Savior, I am Thine. Therefore my happiness is great, I am content, for Thee I wait, Trust wholly in Thy name, and then I pray: Help, Helper, help! Amen.

HYMN.

Lord Jesus, life is hard, as Thou dost know,
And hours of peace and rest are very rare;
But it is sweet, after the toil and woe,
To nestle close to Thee with thoughts of prayer.
If Thou wilt lay Thy hand upon my head,
I shall arise refreshed and comforted.

Dear Master, I am sitting at Thy feet;
I would not miss a look or lose a word;
The hour is very holy when we meet;
I fain would see and hear none but the Lord;
I long to lay aside joy, grief, and fear,
And only know and feel that Thou art near.

The world's discordant noises evermore
Clang round about my ears and weary me
There were rough hands, ungentle hearts before
That troubled me, but now I come to Thee,
O Jesus, quiet me with tender speech,
While up to Thee my wistful arms I reach.

In life's bewildering strife and eager rush
I lose so much of Thy sweet gentleness;
But in the peace and solace of this hush
Strengthen and soothe me with Thy blessedness;
Give to me what Thou wilt; here at Thy side,
Whate'er it be, I shall be satisfied.

The Afflicted Person Takes Comfort in the Mercy of God.

EXHORTATION.

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plentiful in mercy. He will not always chide; neither will He keep His anger forever. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. *Ps. 103. 8. 9. 13.*

In misery and distress how sad it is to have to deal with hard-hearted and unkind people! However, an afflicted child of God should rest assured (1) that his faithful God knows all his suffering, distress, and trials, how great and grievous they are, how long they will last, and how keenly they are felt by the soul. Not only does God know these things, but (2) He also takes pity on the afflicted. We see this in the instance of the grief-stricken widow at Nain and of all the sick and distressed whom Jesus went to meet of His own accord, and whom He relieved. Thus He spoke concerning the multitude: "I have compassion on the people." And concerning Zion we read: "My bowels are troubled for thee; I will surely have mercy upon thee." Reflecting upon the fact that God is so merciful and exercises compassion, an afflicted person (3) should not lose heart, but seek refuge with the merciful God; for they that mourn shall be comforted.

(4) God manifests His mercy towards the afflicted, partly by giving them cheerfulness and resolute courage, partly by sustaining them in their suffering and giving them strength to endure and bear it, partly by removing it from them altogether. If a father takes pity on his child, neither will God without mercy suffer the afflicted to perish in their distress.

PRAYER.

O Thou all-loving God, whose mercy has no end, and whose kindness is renewed every morning, behold, I, an afflicted and sorrowful soul, come before Thy most holy countenance and pour out before Thee the great grief of my afflicted heart. My distressful condition and the great misery which has befallen me are indeed well known to Thee. My soul is sorrowful; my spirit is in anguish, and afflic-

tions innumerable have compassed me round about. I look about me for helpers, but find none. Some men refuse to give me succor, others do not know my distress, and I do not like to reveal it to them. But to Thee, O God, I make complaint with a heart full of grief. I know that Thou art merciful and moved to pity by our distress. Thou didst take pity on the stricken widow weeping for her son; Thou wast moved to compassion when Thou sawest that the people who had gathered about Thee had nothing to eat, and Thy compassion went hand in hand with Thy mercy and succor.

Therefore I come to Thee and plead, Have mercy upon me! O God, I am Thy creature; therefore Thou wilt not forsake the work of Thy hands. Yea, I am more: I am also Thy child whom Thou hast taken into the arms of Thy mercy in Holy Baptism; therefore I say: O my Father, have compassion on Thy poor and forsaken child. My Jesus, I have been bought with Thy holy blood; I am Thy portion and inheritance, purchased with Thy precious blood; therefore Thou wilt have compassion on what is Thine own. O Thou precious Holy Spirit, bear witness with my spirit that in spite of all my suffering I am still a child of God. And when I grow faint in praying and can hardly pray any more, do Thou cry within me: Abba, Father!

Behold, I am sinking; oh, reach out Thy hand for me! Lord, help me; Lord, be at my side! Lord, Lord, let Thy mercy be enlarged upon me and give me cheerfulness of heart! Yea, write upon my heart and constantly cry to my soul these words: Thou art not forsaken; I will have compassion upon thee;

I am with thee in thy distress: I will deliver thee and honor thee. O Lord, according to Thy great mercy strengthen my faith, sustain me in my distress, give me each day new strength and fresh ability, in order that my faith may not cease, my hope may not sink, nor my confidence in Thee grow weak.

Thou sayest: Is not Ephraim my dear son and my pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him. I will surely have mercy upon him. Remember me also: Thou hast promised mercy also to me; I, too, am Thy child; have compassion also on me. Thou hast never yet forsaken me; do not forsake me now; help Thy child who seeks refuge only in Thy mercy.

Did ever mourner plead with Thee, And Thou refuse that mourner's plea? Does not the word still fixed remain That none shall seek Thy face in vain? That were a grief I could not bear, Didst Thou not hear and answer prayer; But a prayer-hearing, answering God Supports me under every load. Amen.

HYMN.

O keep me always trusting,
And keep me ever glad;
Let not my heart be sorry,
Let not my face be sad,
In Jesus let me glory,
Who gave Himself for me;
Who fills my heart with singing,
My lips with melody.

I do not know what sorrows
May wait for me to-day,
But this I know, His presence
Will take their sting away;

I do not fear to meet them.
 Or great they be or small,
 For without His permission
 No evil can befall.

I neither know what pleasures
 To-day may me await,
 I know *some* joy shall surely
 Come early or come late.
 In trials and temptations
 Hear Jesus' prayer for me,
 And let my faith not waver,
 But gain intensity.

I know Thy loving-kindness
 Encompasseth me round,
 And though Thy love must chasten,
 Thy comfortings abound.
 So keep me always trusting,
 And keep me ever glad;
 Let not my heart be sorry,
 Let not my face be sad.

The Afflicted Person Ponders the Divine Promises.

EXHORTATION.

Because he hath set his love upon **Me**, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high because he hath known **My** name. **He** shall call upon **Me**, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him **My** salvation. *Ps. 91, 14—16.*

As greatly as trials, misfortune, and distress depress us, so gloriously do the divine promises of mercy lift us up again. Therefore an afflicted person should reflect (1) that all the divine promises concern him also. We are not to imagine that the promises were given only to Moses, David, and those living at that time. No; they are intended also for us; for Paul says, Romans 15, 4: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scrip-

tures might have hope." Moreover, he should consider (2) that all divine promises are fulfilled at the time which God has appointed. Therefore an afflicted person should not prescribe to God the time and season when He is to help, but wait for His help in meekness and faith.

(3) An afflicted person should reflect that God's promises to help, redeem, save, and deliver us from all external ills are sometimes fulfilled in this life, sick persons recovering from their illness, mourners being made to rejoice, people in distress being delivered, and afflicted persons comforted; but that sometimes God does not fulfil these promises until in the life everlasting, when all the promises of God will reach their perfect fulfilment. Reflecting upon this fact, an afflicted person (4) should be still and hope in the goodness of God, who has already fulfilled His promises to so many thousands of people.

PRAYER.

Lord, my God, when Thou saidst, "Seek ye My face," my heart said unto Thee, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." In my grief I know not where to find consolation and counsel except with Thee. With Thee my heart has at all times found comfort, help, and counsel.

Especially do I seek consolation in Thy glorious promises; in them I find the true and living fountain to refresh me in the anguish of my soul. I come into Thy sanctuary; in Thy holy Word I seek strengthening manna for my famished soul and living water for my faint heart. Thou hast said: "I will be with thee in trouble; I will deliver thee." O Lord, the troubles of my soul are enlarged; bring Thou me out of my distresses. Thou hast said: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." Thou hast said: "The moun-

tains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from thee." O Lord, do have mercy on me; do not depart from me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; uphold me with Thy free Spirit.

O my Lord and God, I know that Thou wilt faithfully keep Thy promise and truth to me in heaven. If Thy Word is not to be my comfort, I shall have to perish in my distress. But though my heart is filled with griefs, Thy consolations refresh my soul. Thy holy Word places Thee before me as a mighty God, a loving Father, a strong Helper, a gracious Succorer, a sure Deliverer; in this I trust; in this I take comfort. My heart is content and undismayed and waits for the Lord.

Therefore, return to thy peace, my soul; the Lord will not cast away forever. He afflicts indeed, but He has compassion on thee according to His great goodness. Then why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning, until He show us His mercy. Gladden my afflicted soul, strengthen my weary soul, uphold my sinking soul, raise up my downcast soul, comfort my sorrowful soul. Take me into Thy arms and comfort me. Do not leave me, nor withdraw Thy hand from me, O God of my salvation. I yearn for Thee; my soul longs for Thee and sighs: When wilt Thou comfort me?

God of my life, to Thee I call; Afflicted at Thy feet I fall; When the great water-floods prevail, Leave not my trembling heart to fail. Amen.

HYMN.

Fret not, sad soul,
 When waters roll,
 And seem to overwhelm thy heart,
 God will the fearful waters part,
 And thou shalt cross,
 Nor suffer loss.

 Hope, weary soul;
 Despair will roll
 Its heavy arm on thee if faint;
 In heaven's law there's no restraint
 But to the bad.
 In Christ be glad.

 Trust, fainting soul,
 Though doubt may roll
 Its baneful fruits on all around;
 Stand thou the test, hold fast thy ground.
 On Jesus' breast
 Securely rest.

 Speed on, tried soul,
 Press to the goal;
 And if, perchance, the way you lose,
 Thy Guide is near, His footprints choose.
 Let go thy sin.
 And heaven win.

The Afflicted Person Ponders God's Design in Sending the Cross.

EXHORTATION.

No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. *Heb. 12, 11.*

When a child is made to feel the chastising of his father, he weeps and thinks himself greatly afflicted. Is it a wonder, then, if afflicted persons do not know how to conduct themselves under the cross?

Now, an afflicted person should reflect (1) that by sending us a cross God does not mean to lead us into destruction, but to save us from it. When a surgeon cuts into a wound and applies caustics, his intention is to heal and purify. By means of tribulation God intends to draw us away from the world and unto Himself. (2) When God sees that we have fallen in love with earthly things and creatures, He takes them away from us, in order that we may love Him alone and find our joy in Him. Yea, when He sees that because of our constant happiness, ease, and continuous prosperity we are about to become sluggish in our prayers and negligent in our Christian profession, He sends us a little grief and sorrow, in order that we may long for Him again and seek to grow in love and knowledge of Him. All the while, however, He remains a gracious, almighty, wise, and kind God, who loves us cordially.

PRAYER.

My God, who hast now plunged me into such great sadness and grief that my heart is in anguish, my mouth filled with sighing, and my eyes with tears, oh, I know not whither to turn. Was I not happy? Was I not in goodly peace? Did I not have rest? Whence, then, comes this unrest?

My distress is great, but I will not on that account flee from Thee, my Shepherd. Thou hast struck me down with this grievous blow; raise me up again with Thy powerful Word, that I may ponder why this distress has been sent me. I know for a certainty that this cross has afflicted me not for my perdition nor for injury to my soul; O no, Thou Lover of life, my Father, it is not Thy purpose to destroy me and to wreak Thy anger upon me, but by placing me in such a mournful condition it is Thy purpose to test my love, whether I will love Thee in evil as well as in good days.

Thou wouldst test my faith, whether I believe

also that Thou art an almighty, wise, and merciful God, who is able to deliver me from this distress and to sustain me in it. Thou wouldst test my patience, whether I will gladly bear this cross to Thy glory. Thou wouldst test my confidence, whether I trust in Thee above all things and rely on Thee, on Thy grace, love, and mercy. Thou wouldst test my hope, whether I will hope when there seems to be nothing to hope for, and credit Thy Word and promise.

Yea, my gracious God and Father, Thou wouldst by means of the cross draw me away from the world, its lusts, sins, and habits, that I may turn to Thee alone and cling to Thee. Thou takest from me what gladdens me that I may find my joy in Thee alone. Thou takest from me what I delight in in order that I may esteem Thee my highest and dearest treasure. Well and good, my gracious God, I wish to become as Thou wouldst have me to be; I wish to bear what Thou layest upon me.

Give me Thy Holy Spirit that He may furnish me with strength and ability for this end. Without Thee it is impossible for me to maintain myself in tribulation, but by Thy Spirit and gracious succor I can conquer. I am also willing and glad to be patient and hold still while Thou art at work, no matter how long it may last. I will also renounce the world and worldly pleasures and cling to Thee alone that I may become one spirit with Thee. Thus this cross will purify me and greatly benefit my soul. Thou wilt send my help at the proper time.

Friend of the friendless and the faint, Where should I lodge my deep complaint? Where but with Thee, whose open door Invites the helpless and the poor? Amen.

HYMN.

Is life to thee a mystery,
Are some things hard to bear?
Does God reveal all clearly
As heavenward thou dost stare?
Or dost thou stop and wonder
Amid life's stormy days
Why God in all His wisdom
Doth lead in such dark ways?

"What I do now thou know'st not,"
Says Christ, the Friend of friends,
"But thou shalt know hereafter,"
Are loving words He sends.
The stroke that falls upon thee
In this cold, dreary land
Prepares the soul for heaven,
A house not made with hands.

Thou may'st not know just now,
Why trials should be sent
To cut off all affections
On which the soul was bent.
But God, who loves in mercy,
Has plans divinely wise,
That all at last to glory
May in His likeness rise.

Baptized in seas of sorrow,
Tears like the dew may fall,
Yet by them God doth quicken
The weak who on Him call.
For while night's dreary curtains
Are closely round us drawn,
We fall asleep in Jesus,
And wake refreshed at dawn.

In many ways of suff'ring,
By tears and pain and woe,
God separates from evil
His children here below,

He leads in valleys lonely,
 And hedges up the way,
 To keep them in the "strait path,"
 That leads to endless day.

The burdens which oppress us,
 And oftentimes sink us low,
 Are meant for wings to lift us
 Above this world below,
 That when our work is over
 And we before God stand,
 He shall unto us pilgrims
 Extend a Father's hand.

Thus suff'ring with our Master,
 Bearing with Him the cross,
 Fighting with Him the battle,
 We shall not suffer loss.
 But glorified and reigning,
 We shall with Jesus stand,
 And shout 'mid scenes of rapture:
 "I now do understand."

The Afflicted Person Prays for Patience and Strength.

EXHORTATION.

Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. *Heb. 10, 35. 36.*

Patience is a fruit of the Spirit; it comes from God, and to obtain it we must call upon Him. An afflicted person must pray the more fervently and earnestly, the more vehemently his tribulation assails him, as it is written concerning Christ: "And being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly."

Accordingly, the afflicted person should reflect, (1) that this is patience, to remain quiet in our trials and submit to God's will. He knows that his affliction comes from God, who can remove it again. He knows that God loves him dearly, despite the fact that He has laid the cross upon him, and that He has not therefore

ceased to be his Father. Therefore the afflicted person (2) does not murmur against God, though his trial is long and grievous, but he says: I will hold my peace and not open my mouth; Thou wilt do all things well.

(3) If he should nevertheless become discouraged on account of violent pains and manifold suffering, he must call upon God for strength. However, God strengthens afflicted persons sometimes by letting them know in their hearts that the trial will soon cease, at other times, by assuring them that He will not forsake them, or by affording them some help and alleviation. (4) By these means the afflicted person becomes strong again in the Lord and in the power of His might. Men should by all means beware lest they become impatient; for God has promised that He will help us bear our cross. Patience brings true quietness of the heart and mind.

PRAYER.

Lord, all my desire is before Thee, and my groaning is not hid from Thee. O my God, my groaning is not hid from Thee, and my misery and distress is well known to Thee. This is my consolation, that I know it comes from loving hands. I have not chosen it for myself, but Thou hast laid it upon me; help me, then, to bear it. And since patience, too, belongs to the good gifts which come down from above, from the Father of lights, O grant me this gift according to Thy mercy. When Thou dost strengthen me, when Thou dost help and succor me, I can do all things, and the cross will not be too heavy for me. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Do not assail me too violently, lest I be unable to withstand. Have patience with my weakness, strengthen my weary hands, support my tottering knees; say to my fainting heart: Thy God is King; thy Jesus is with thee; thy King comes unto thee; He is just and having salvation. Yea, when Thou dost help me, I am helped indeed.

Therefore help me, O my Salvation, for Thy name's sake. I seek refuge in Thee.

Impress upon my soul that it is Thy holy will that I shall suffer thus and bear my cross, in order that I may cheerfully resolve and say: Father, not my will, but Thine, be done. Place before me Thy love, namely, that also under the cross and amidst afflictions Thou still lovest me, that my suffering lasts only a little while and not forever, yea, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. Help me to bear in mind that Thou art my gracious God and loving Father, that this cross is not a sign of Thy anger, but of Thy grace. Convince me that it will be for my benefit, since by it I am drawn to Thee. Hold before my soul the example of my dear Savior Jesus Christ, who patiently endured all things and like a lamb did not open His mouth. Grant that with such quiet and resignation I may follow after Him by Thy grace. Grant me to endure and to suffer with Him, in order that I may also be crowned and lifted up to glory with Him. Let not my cross pluck Thy Word from my heart, nor weaken my faith, nor hinder my prayer; but give me new strength and new courage when I must weather a storm or just have passed through one. Yea, put me in mind that I shall soon be gladdened by Thy help, and that Thy powerful succor will surely refresh me.

Fair is the lot that's cast for me; I have an Advocate with Thee; They whom the world caresses most Have no such privilege to boast. Poor though I be, despised, forgot, Yet God, my God, forgets me not; And he is safe and must succeed For whom the Lord Himself does plead. Amen.

HYMN.

I cannot always see the way that leads
 To heights above;
I sometimes quite forget He leads me on
 With hand of love;
But yet I know the path must lead me to
 Immanuel's land,
And when I reach life's summit, I shall know
 And understand.

I cannot always trace the onward course
 My ship must take;
But, looking backward, I behold afar
 Its shining wake,
Illumined with God's light of love, and so
 I onward go,
In perfect trust that He who holds the helm
 The course must know.

I cannot always see the plan on which
 He builds my life;
For oft the sound of hammers, blow on blow,
 The noise of strife,
Confuse me till I quite forget He knows
 And oversees,
And that in all details, with His good plan,
 My life agrees.

I cannot always know and understand
 The Master's rule;
I cannot always do the tasks He gives
 In life's hard school;
But I am learning with His help to solve
 Them one by one,
And, when I cannot understand, to say,
 "Thy will be done."

The Afflicted Person Prays to have His Affliction Removed.

EXHORTATION.

Like a crane or a swallow so did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove; mine eyes fail with looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me. Behold, for peace I had great bitterness; but Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back.

Is. 38, 14. 17.

God has promised His children alleviation and comfort in their sufferings, either in this life or in that which is to come. Afflicted persons are, therefore, not forbidden to beseech God that He would grant them these things in this life, provided they submit themselves at the same time entirely to the will of God.

Therefore, (1) when they experience the severity, bitterness, and tediousness of their cross, they may pray indeed that He would remove it; for that is what Christ, our Savior, Himself did, who besought His heavenly Father that the bitter cup might be removed from Him. In this way afflicted persons manifest their trust and confidence in the almighty power of God. However, (2) this prayer for the removal of the cross must be combined with a resigned submission to God's will. It is better that we bear willingly the cross that God has sent us than that He remove it from us on account of our murmuring, and then, in His anger, send us a more grievous one.

This prayer for the removal of our affliction should (3) flow from the good intention that we may be able to serve God more cheerfully and with less hindrance, since affliction frequently distracts us, dashes our zeal, and makes us unfit for holy exercises. But if impatience were to prompt the desire to be rid of one's cross, or the wish that one might indulge again in the pleasures and joys of the world, it is easily seen that God will not hear such a prayer. If the heart is still carnal, vain, and earthly-minded, He lets the cross remain till, like a holy fire, it has consumed this dross and all impurities.

PRAYER.

O God, plenteous in mercy, who lookest upon the afflicted and distressed, and whose tender mercies are over all Thy works, behold, I, a poor and

afflicted soul, am standing here at the door of Thy grace and beseech Thee to help me. Thou knowest how Thou hast afflicted me; Thou knowest how Thou hast laid hold of me; but Thou knowest also that no one but Thou alone can remove my affliction from me. Thy fatherly hand which has wounded me must heal me; He that slew me must restore me to life; yea, He that brought me down to hell must bring me out again.

Therefore, O God, plenteous in mercy, I come to Thee and say: Lord, help me; have compassion upon me. Thy wrath endures for but a moment, and Thou takest pleasure in life; however, what is but a moment to Thee seems much too long for me. Merciful God, who hast given Thy children such a kind permission in Thy Word to pray to Thee, saying: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," let my asking, seeking, and knocking find favor with Thee. Remove my affliction from me; however, not my will, but Thine, be done. I will not prescribe to Thee the time and season, the manner and method of helping me, but will abide Thy help in patience.

O let me experience some refreshing; if Thou wilt not take my distress from me entirely, remove but a part of it. Thou intendest to hide Thyself from Thy believers only for a moment, and to gather them again with great mercies. O God, how long wilt Thou forget me utterly? How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me? Is Thy mercy clean gone forever, and doth Thy promise fail forevermore? O let me realize that Thou art still my Father, who will have compassion upon me. Let me become per-

suated that my eager prayer has been acceptable to Thee. Long my heart hath panted, till it well-nigh fainted, thirsting after Thee. With Thee nothing is impossible. Lord of hosts is Thy name, great in wisdom and mighty in power. Thou art the consolation of Israel and the Helper in need; therefore do not forsake me; save me, and be gracious unto me.

Quicken me again after Thou hast afflicted me so long, after I have endured my suffering so long, and do not withdraw Thy hand from me, O God of my salvation. But if Thy hour for helping has not yet arrived, stablish me within and give me such strength that I can bear my cross to Thy glory. For if Thou, dear Father, bearest it with me, or lightenest the burden while I walk in Thy strength, I shall also consider that Thou hast removed it, rejoice in this, and thank Thee for it. However, if Thou wilt not remove my cross at all in the present life, but if it is Thy holy design that I should bear it until death, let Thy will be done also in this. Only do not suffer me to be tempted above that which I am able, and sweeten all my bitterness and affliction with the enjoyment of Thy love, with Thy mighty succor, and with a refreshing foretaste of heaven.

O Lord, no longer lengthen Our time of misery; Our hands and feet do strengthen; And until death may we By Thee be watched and cared for In faithfulness and love; So come we where prepared for Us is our blest abode. Amen.

HYMN.

O soul, why art thou not at peace,
Why still so sad?
If thou wouldst only hope in God,
Thou couldst be glad!

Why dost thou always doubt the love
The Savior bears
To every sad, sin-laden soul?
He knows thy cares.

O cast on Him thy many cares,
And trust His love;
He'll lift thy soul from this vain world
To realms above.

Go onward, soul, be not cast down,
Though dark the way;
The night cannot forever last,
Bright breaks the day.

On that bright day, beyond the night,
The Savior's love
Will lull the soul to rest at last
In heaven above.

The Afflicted Person Reflects upon the Happy Issue of His Cross.

EXHORTATION.

The Lord will not cast off forever; but though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. *Lam. 3, 31—33.*

Every affliction becomes light when there is hope that there will be a change for the better soon. A difficult journey becomes short when it is quickly accomplished. Similarly an afflicted person should bear in mind, (1) that his misery will certainly have an end, and that, perhaps even in this life; just as God turned David's flight, Hezekiah's illness, Job's distress, the widow's tears and the palsied man's pains to their advantage even in this life. Most assuredly, however, God will end the cross of the godly and turn it to their advantage at death; for then they shall obtain the crown, the white robe, and the joy of heaven; then He will wipe away all tears from their eyes.

(2) An afflicted person should bear in mind, when he is sad-

dened by his affliction, that his soul is being edified by suffering, for by this means he was led to know the omnipotence, wisdom, love, and mercy of God. By means of his sufferings and their happy issue his confidence has been established and his faith strengthened. And if the love of the world has been extinguished in him by the cross, so that he has now become more godly, more devout, more Christlike, more humble, and more meek, he has certainly derived a great benefit from his cross. Thus the issue of the cross remains a happy and blessed one, whether the cross is terminated here in time, or hereafter in eternity.

PRAYER.

O mighty God, how grievous and great is my affliction! Thou knowest that every day has its peculiar burden, and nearly every hour its special pain; yet my confidence shall not cease on that account, but in the midst of my tribulations I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills whence cometh my help, namely, to Thee, the almighty, good, and merciful God. I know that Thou wilt gladden me at last after my tribulation; after the storm Thou wilt surely make the sun shine for me. Thou hast promised to refresh those that labor and are heavy laden. I await, then, the fulfilment of this gracious promise.

Oh, if it makes for Thy glory and my salvation, grant me the desire of my heart and the petition of my lips; for in Thee, O Lord, Lord, have I trusted from my youth. I know that Thy right hand can change all things. Oh, if it be Thy holy will, change my condition: refresh me, gladden me, hear me! By this I shall know Thy great omnipotence, that Thou art able to deliver from the most grievous and greatest afflictions. By this I shall know Thy great goodness, by which Thou hast had pity upon me like a father. Without this affliction I should perhaps

not have learned as much of my Christian religion as I have now learned by my afflictions. Now I behold Thy holy design: Thou didst purpose to make me humble, meek, and godly, to draw me to Thyself in order that I might at all times find my joy in Thee, and rest my hope on Thee alone. Now that these things have been accomplished, Thou removest my affliction and makest my mind, which was quite restless before, once more quiet, resigned, and content.

O what a glorious fruit this bitter root has borne! O what a great benefit has come out of my affliction! David's persecutions furnished him the occasion for composing the most excellent hymns of praise and thanksgiving. My tears, too, shall become a seed from which good fruits shall grow. The thorns which prick me shall bear roses. After my battle shall come the victory, after the conflict the crown, after the suffering the deliverance, after the sad and mournful night the joyful morning. For this I thank Thee; for this I praise Thee. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. How glorious shall be my future deliverance on the last day, when freed from every evil I shall enter into the joyful life of heaven!

In hope of that immortal crown I now the cross sustain, And gladly wander up and down, And smile at toil and pain: I suffer on my threescore years Till my Deliverer come, And wipe away His servant's tears, And take His exile home. Amen.

HYMN.

I asked the Lord, that I might grow
In faith and love, and every grace;
Might more of His salvation know
And seek more earnestly His face.

'Twas He who taught me thus to pray,
And, He, I trust, has answered prayer;
But it has been in such a way
As almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that, in some favored hour
At once He'd answer my request:
And by His love's constraining power
Subdue my sins and give me rest.

Instead of this, He made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart,
And let the angry powers of hell
Assault my soul in every part.

Yea, more; with His own hand He seemed
Intent to aggravate my woe;
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed;
Blasted my gourds, and laid me low.

"Lord, why is this!" I trembling cried,
"Wilt Thou pursue Thy worm to death?"
"'Tis in this way," the Lord replied,
"I answer prayer for grace and faith.

"These inward trials I employ
From self and pride to set thee free,
And break thy schemes of earthly joy,
That thou may'st seek thy all in Me."

Afflicted Widows Pour Out Their Heart before God.

EXHORTATION.

Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto Me, I will surely hear their cry. Ex. 22, 22. 23.

"I am indeed a widow woman, and mine husband is dead," thus the wise woman of Tekoah describes a widow. 2 Sam. 14, 5. Widowhood is (1) a state of mourning, because a woman must be without her husband's help, counsel, comfort, presence, and kind-

ness. Even wealthy widows feel this loss keenly, while to a poor widow it is the more painful, because death has deprived her of the person who supported her and her children and under the blessing of God provided for them. Widowhood is (2) an afflicted state, because unchristian persons frequently do violence to widows, rob them of their possessions, oppress them, despise them, and do them wrong.

However, widowhood is (3) a state which God protects. God has commanded all men not to harm widows and orphans, and has threatened to avenge any wrong that may be done to them. God has promised to be the widows' Husband, Helper, and Judge, who will take care of them, manage their affairs, and advance their interests. Yea, He has promised them His special blessing and succor, as well as His particular help and mercy.

Reflecting upon these facts, godly widows should (1) not despair of God; for though their husbands have died, God is not dead. (2) They should accept their lot as a trial of their trust and hope in God. Nobody should cling to a creature or place his confidence in it. Now, if some widows imagine that no one could support them and their children except their husbands, they make idols of them. Hence God desires to make them free from this sin, and shows them that He is able to sustain and support them and their children also without their husbands. Therefore Christian widows should (3) persevere in prayer, not grow distrustful, zealously serve God, lead a godly, quiet, and Christian life, and God will abundantly provide for them, support and sustain them.

PRAYER.

O Thou merciful and gracious God, who art the Refuge of all the afflicted, desolate, and distressed, it has pleased Thee in Thy holy and inscrutable counsel to bring upon me the sad state of widowhood. My sun is gone down at noontide, and the crown of my house is gone. I am a woman in mourning; my husband is dead. Whither shall I turn now? Where shall I seek counsel and active aid? O my God, I come to Thee. When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face; my heart said unto Thee,

Thy face, Lord, will I seek. Thou hast promised in Thy holy Word to be the Judge of widows and the Father of orphans. I, the Lord, am Thine Husband; the God of Israel is My name. Oh, then, be now my Husband, my Judge, my Helper, my Deliverer, my Refuge, and the Father of my children. Behold the tears flowing down my cheeks, and let them rise heavenward to receive a gracious hearing. Behold my sighing, and have compassion on me. Make me to understand truly that I have not been forsaken by Thee, although I have to live without a husband, and that Thou, O eternal and immortal God, art not dead, but livest forever, although my husband is in his grave.

It seems that by this affliction Thou wouldst draw me away from all creatures, in order that I may trust in Thee alone and rest my hope only on Thee. My God and Father, I believe from my heart that Thou art able to protect me and my children without a husband, to support us without a husband, and to provide for us without a husband. Strengthen this my faith according to Thy grace and mercy. Show me a token for good; guide me as Thou didst Naomi; provide for me as Thou didst for Ruth; bless my cruse of oil as Thou didst that of the widow in Israel; let my barrel of meal not waste, nor my cruse of oil fail, as that of the widow of Zarephath; wipe away my tears and say to me, Weep not! as Thou didst to the widow of Nain. O Lord, give me what I need from day to day; bless my going out and my coming in; preserve me from misfortune, and provide for me and my family according to Thy promise.

I place all my trust in Thee, Thou living God;

I rely upon Thee with all my heart and all my soul. Thou art wise enough to sustain me; Thou art powerful enough to protect me; Thou art rich enough to support me and to provide for me; Thou art merciful enough to give me all that I need; Thou art present everywhere to succor me in every need, to help and deliver me. If a traveler trusts the guide-post to point him to the right way; if a patient commits his body and his life to the physician, why should I not trust Thee and rely upon Thee, O almighty and wise God? Help me, O God of my salvation, for Thy name's sake. Father and mother forsake me, but Thou, O Lord, dost take me up. Behold, for peace I had great bitterness, but Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption. My heart is filled with sorrows, but Thy consolations and gracious promises delight my soul.

Grant that I may in this lonely state conduct myself as a believer and a godly person, that I may find my joy in Thee, delight myself in Thee, and give no one offense. For I know of a truth that those who serve God are comforted after their trials, delivered from their afflictions, and find favor after their chastisement. Oh, then, my God, let me also find favor with Thee after my suffering, help after my affliction, joy after my weeping, consolation after my sadness. Make all my enemies my friends, and grant that I may find favor and grace with all people. Hear my prayer, give me Thy blessing, guide me by Thy hand, provide for me and my family according to Thy gracious promise. I was cast upon Thee from the womb; therefore Thou wilt

be my Shield and Shelter also at this time. Thou wilt keep me and do good unto me, until Thou wilt bring me to that glory where I shall praise Thee with joyful lips forevermore.

Courage, faint heart; the promise is for thee; From hour to hour The Father's loving hand upholds with power; And as thy days thy strength will also be When dangers lower. Why dwell with anxious thought upon the years He hides from you? Why lift the veil He throws across the view Lest coming cares should cause thee needless fears, Thy faith renew. His tender care along the journey's length, With love untold, Will with fresh mercies every hour unfold; For every need will give thee added strength — Thy life uphold. Then trust His love to lead thee safely on From day to day; What lies beyond in misty shadows gray, He will reveal to thee each coming dawn, And smooth the way. Amen.

HYMN.

Whatever God ordains is good,
Holy His will abideth;
I will be still whate'er He doth,
And follow where He guideth.
He is my God; Though dark my road,
He knoweth how to shield me,
Wherefore to Him I yield me.

Whatever God ordains is good.
He never will deceive me;
He leads me by the proper path,
I know He will not leave me,
And take content What He hath sent;
His hand that sends my sadness
Will turn my tears to gladness.

Whatever God ordains is good.
His loving thought attends me;
No poisoned draught the cup can be
That my Physician sends me,
But medicine due; For God is true.
Of doubt, then, I'll divest me,
And on His goodness rest me.

Whatever God ordains is good.
 My Life, my Light can never
 Intend me harm; then to His care
 I give myself forever
 In weal or woe; For well I know,
 Some day I shall see clearly
 That God did love me dearly.

Whatever God ordains is good.
 Though now this cup in drinking
 May bitter to my taste appear,
 I take it all unshrinking;
 For to my heart God will impart
 A timely balm of healing,
 And end each painful feeling.

Whatever God ordains is good.
 Here shall my stand be taken;
 Though sorrow, need, or death be mine,
 Yet am I not forsaken;
 My Father's care Is round me there,
 His arms embrace and shield me;
 Then to my God I yield me.

Forsaken Orphans Tell Their Troubles to God.

EXHORTATION.

When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up. *Ps. 27, 10.*

If there be a sad state, that of orphans certainly is one — that state when children, bereft of father and mother, must live among strangers, become servants, eke out a living, and spend their days among them. Sad though this state is, nevertheless it produces many good results in the souls of such orphans as fear God. For (1) children whom father and mother have forsaken should bear in mind that, although they have no parents on earth, they have a rich Father in heaven, who has become their Father in Holy Baptism. This heavenly Father does not die; He is rich, He has all that we need; He is mighty, He can give everything;

He is a wise God, who knows wonderful and glorious ways for accomplishing everything.

(2) Godly orphans should reflect that God often deprives children of their parents intentionally, in order to show them that He is able, even without father and mother, to sustain, support, and provide for poor and forsaken children, yea, to raise them to honor and bless them abundantly. To teach us this He has placed before our eyes many thousand instances of persons who declare, as did Jacob, with joyful lips: I had nothing but my staff when I passed over this Jordan. From home I took with me as my staff poverty and my bare life; hence all that I now possess God has given me.

(3) However, orphans should also persevere in their trust in God, be humble toward all, diligent at their work, devout at their prayers, eager in their attendance at church, attentive listeners, chaste in their life, godly in their conduct, faithful in the performance of their duties, upright in all their dealings. Above all, however, they should have God before their eyes and in their hearts, not consent to any sin, nor act contrary to God's commandment. If they keep within these bounds, God will surely not forsake them. He will guide them in strange, but glorious ways, so that they will have cause to praise the almighty power and goodness of God all the days of their life

PRAYER.

O Thou gracious, merciful God and Father, I, a poor, forsaken child, prostrate myself before Thy exalted throne and pray Thee humbly and from my heart: Take me into Thy fatherly care. It has pleased Thee in Thy wise counsel to deprive me of the provident care of my parents. Whither shall I go now? I have become an orphan; who will take care of me now that I no longer have a father? O loving and kind God and Father, I come to Thee: take me into Thy care; have compassion on me. I was cast upon Thee from the womb; Thou hast been my trust from my youth. Behold, my father and my mother forsake me, but do Thou, O Lord, Lord, take me up.

O my God, Thou givest food to the birds roving over the wide fields; Thou arrayest the flowers; Thou providest for the wild beasts of the forest. Thou wilt therefore also provide for me like a faithful father; Thou wilt take pity on me and be gracious unto me. My eyes are longing for Thee; I lift up mine eyes unto the hills whence cometh my help; my help cometh from the Lord who made heaven and earth. I know that I am not forsaken by Thee, although I am forsaken by men. How many examples do I see before me of children whose parents Thou didst suffer to die, and whom Thou nevertheless didst guide, provide for, and support gloriously. O God, who didst draw Moses out of the water, look upon me now that the waves of affliction are about to engulf me. O Lord Jesus, who hast taken faithful care of children, and didst bless them, bless me also. Take me into the arms of Thy mercy, bear me up, and preserve me from misfortune. O precious Holy Spirit, who guidest believers like children, guide me also. Show me Thy way, O Lord; lead me in Thy truth; unite my heart to fear Thy name. O Triune God, be my Keeper who protects me, my Helper who succors me, my Companion when I go in or out.

Bless me with good friends wherever I may sojourn; raise up for me patrons and benefactors who take pity on my distress. Let my foster-parents and guardians be filled with love toward me. Do good to them in return according to Thy mercy, preserve them from misfortunes and recompense to them temporal, spiritual, and heavenly blessings for all the good they do to me.

Give me a humble and obedient heart that I may

not forfeit the favor and kindness of my patrons through obstinacy, dissolute living, wickedness, or sinful practises. Guard me against temptations that I may not deny Thee because of my poverty, or fall away from faith, but help me to grow evermore in knowledge and love of Thee. Let Thy good Spirit always guide, sanctify, rule, and keep me that I may not be led into wanton sins by evil companions. Let me not fall into carousing and unchastity, and preserve me from a perverse heart. O Thou gracious God and Father, frighten me away from the paths of the wicked; warn me when I am about to commit sin; admonish me when I would indulge an evil desire; hold me when I fall; bring me back to Thy fold when I am going astray; strengthen me when I am weak; restore me to health when I am ill.

O faithful God and Father, I commit myself entirely to Thee; let my going out and my coming in be commended to Thee. How will I thank Thee, how will I sing praises to Thee, for having done so much good to me! My tongue shall say: This is what God has done: God has blessed, sustained, accompanied, guided me, and provided for me. Yea, I will tell all my fellow-men how Thou hast shown Thyself a gracious Father to me. O Lord, Lord, hear the prayer of the forsaken orphan; hear the voice of Thy child. Thou didst become my Father in Holy Baptism; into Thy hands my parents placed me after my natural birth. Thou art a rich and immortal Father, a wise and loving Father; therefore be merciful to Thy child. I know Thou canst help me and art willing to help me; O Lord, help me for Thy goodness' sake, in order

that I may be able to say in days to come: The Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad.

Jesus, Savior, pilot me Over life's tempestuous sea; Unknown waves before me roll, Hiding rock and treach'rous shoal; Chart and compass came from Thee: Jesus, Savior, pilot me. As a mother stills her child, Thou canst hush the ocean wild; Boisterous waves obey Thy will When Thou say'st to them, "Be still!" Wondrous Sovereign of the sea, Jesus, Savior, pilot me. When at last I near the shore, And the fearful breakers roar 'Twixt me and the peaceful rest, Then, while leaning on Thy breast May I hear Thee say to me, "Fear not, I will pilot thee!" Amen.

HYMN.

Take Thou my hands and lead me
O'er life's rough way,
With heavenly manna feed me
From day to day.
Alone, my footsteps falter,
Or straggle wide;
Lord, who my life canst alter,
Be Thou my Guide.

Take Thou my heart and hide it
In folds of grace,
Though weal or woe betide it,
To know Thy face.
Draw, Lord, of Thy good pleasure
Thy child to Thee.
And grant me faith full measure,
Though naught I see.

Full oft methinks Thou hidest
Thy wondrous might;
Still to my goal Thou guidest
Me through dark night.
Take, then, my hands and lead me
Till life is o'er,
With heavenly manna feed me
Forevermore.

The Afflicted Person Complains of the Weakness of His Faith.

EXHORTATION.

A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench. *Is. 42, 3.*—Lord, increase our faith. *Luke 17, 5.*

If there is anything that can frighten a believing soul, it is this affliction, that the believer imagines he is not praying aright, that he has no faith at all, or that his faith is not the genuine, living faith. Thence arises the doubt whether he is going to be saved.

Such anxious souls may derive comfort from the following reflections: (1) A prayer addressed to God in the name of Jesus and in reliance upon His merit and blood is a true prayer, and a weak faith is a genuine and saving faith as well as a strong faith. Is not a little child a human being just as well as a great, strong man? (2) When a person *would like to believe*, he is already a believer, because such a desire is a work of the Holy Spirit. A godless person does not desire to believe. (3) A weak faith apprehends Jesus, His holy merit and His wounds, just as well as a strong faith. If a gold coin is placed into the hand of a child and a robust man, the one has as much as the other. (4) Satan cannot extinguish the light of faith in the heart, because he cannot even extinguish a lamp at night. (5) Although the joy of faith is not always felt during prayer, faith is nevertheless present, just as an ember or spark hidden beneath the ashes is present, though it is not seen. (6) The certain test that a person has faith is his hatred and striving against unbelief and sin. Thence spring the fruits of faith, Gal. 5, 22: love, humility, meekness, chastity, hope, and the fear of God. For such anxious souls are afraid to speak or do anything wicked. But where these traits are found in a person, there faith exists and the Holy Spirit; for these are not the fruits of the flesh, Gal. 5, 19, but of faith and the Holy Spirit. For faith and the Holy Spirit cannot be separated.

(7) Prayer, reading the Holy Scriptures, patience, waiting upon God—these things strengthen faith. (8) Faith is a gift of God. Now, God is not going to ask of you more than He has given you. (9) Christ has died also for those weak in faith, and prays for them that their faith may not fail. And even if you cannot believe this, it is nevertheless true, because Scripture says so.

PRAYER.

O God, plenteous in mercy, I know from Thy holy Word that faith alone saves, and that without faith no one is acceptable unto Thee. However, desiring to please Thee and to be saved, I am alarmed at myself when at times I find so very little faith in my heart. Therefore kindle in my spirit the light of faith by which I may rightly know Thee, the one true God, as Thou hast revealed Thyself in Thy Word, that I may with my heart believe Thy revealed Word, and with firm confidence and unwavering trust may accept the promises of Thy grace and of the forgiveness of sins which Jesus acquired for me. For it seems to me at times that I am not praying aright, that I am not at all a believer, or that I shall not persevere in faith unto the end.

I bring these complaints before Thee, my God, because I know that every good gift and every perfect gift cometh down from above. Now, since faith is not anybody's achievement, but Thy gift, I pray Thee: Oh, strengthen my weak faith! The bruised reed Thou wilt not break, nor quench the smoking flax. My God, engrave in my heart this comforting truth that a prayer which rests upon the merit, the blood, and death of Jesus is a true prayer, and that a weak faith, which firmly holds to Thee, O Triune God, namely to Thee, O heavenly Father, as our Creator, to Thee, O Jesus, as our only Redeemer and Savior, to Thee, O Holy Spirit, as our Sanctifier and Comforter, is also a faith that is acceptable to Thee and saves.

If it be Thy will, grant me also that I may perceive my faith by an inward joy during prayer, by

strong consolations, and by a joyful hope. O my Jesus, pray also for me, as Thou didst pray for Peter, that my faith fail not! Seal in me the comfort that I have been purchased with Thy holy blood and have become Thy child in Holy Baptism; that my feeble prayer is pleasing to God because of Thy intercession for me; that Thy blood was shed also for me that I might be made righteous and saved by it. And Thou, O gracious Holy Spirit, work in me the true fruits of faith; impel me, sanctify me, yea, dwell in me, and witness to my spirit that I am truly a child of God.

Blessed be Thy holy name, because Thou hast made me to abhor unbelief and sin, to mourn over it, and to fight against it by prayer, and hast also given me a heartfelt desire to live to Thee alone, to serve and obey Thee. From these things I see that Thou art still dwelling in me. Increase and preserve in me these fruits of faith, and make them sweeter and more refreshing to me from day to day. If Thou wilt grant me this request, I shall gladly be content with my weak faith.

Yet one thing, Lord, I ask of Thee, O grant my supplication: When Satan sorely tempteth me, Save me from desperation. O God, my Lord, True to Thy word, Do Thou my soul deliver! Who doth believe, He shall receive. Thy name be praised forever! Amen.

OUR HELPER.

I am often so weary of sorrow,
So weary of struggling with sin,
So timid concerning the morrow,
So faithless of entering in
To the beautiful rest that remaineth
Secure in the city of God,
Where shall enter no evil that staineth,
Nor ever the spoiler hath trod.

But aye when the struggle is sorest,
And dark are the clouds on my soul,
Dear Lord, the sweet cup that Thou pourest
Has balm, and I drink and am whole.
From the quenchless old well of salvation
I quaff the pure waters divine,
And a sense of triumphant elation
Is thrilled through this spirit of mine.

No hand but Thine own, blessed Master,
Could comfort and cheer in the day
When the touch of a sudden disaster
Has cumbered and tangled the way.
No look but Thine own could illumine
When night gathers black o'er the land,
And strength that is failing and human
Lies prone on the desolate strand.

But ever Thy help is the nearest
When help from the earth there is none,
And ever the word that is dearest
Is the Word of the crucified Son;
And aye when the tempest-clouds gather,
I fly for sweet shelter and peace
Through the Son to the heart of the Father,
That terror and tremor may cease.

He restoreth my soul, and I praise Him
Whose love is my chrism and crown;
He restoreth my soul; let me raise Him
A song that His mercy will own.
For often so weary of sorrow,
So weary of fighting with sin,
I look and I long for the morrow,
When the ransomed their freedom shall win.

The Afflicted Person Complains of Sinful, Wicked, and Blasphemous Thoughts.

EXHORTATION.

There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, *My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness.* *2 Cor. 12, 7—9.*

It is sad to hear a sick person complain of pains in every member of his body, but still sadder is that state of the soul when afflicted persons complain of sinful, wicked, and blasphemous thoughts.

For the comfort of such afflicted souls the following reflections may serve: (1) Spiritual trials, despondency, terrors, and anxiety of soul come from God, by whose will the afflicted persons must suffer these things. Without the will of God not a hair can fall from their head; how much less, then, could such anxiety of soul come upon them? (2) Pious Christians and children of God perceive these wicked and abominable thoughts, and are alarmed: the wicked also have these thoughts, but laugh about them. (3) But the fact that the godly are shocked at such thoughts is a sign that they heartily love God, that they are in a state of divine grace and faith, and hence cannot endure such evil things to arise in their hearts. (4) This alarm, this anxiety because of these blasphemous thoughts, is a sign that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are still dwelling in the hearts of these persons. If Satan were in their hearts, — as the afflicted imagine that he is, — they would never be alarmed at these thoughts.

(5) Such blasphemous thoughts God does not charge against the souls of the godly, a) because they arise against their will; b) because the godly mourn over them; c) because they have no pleasure in them; d) because, when these thoughts approach, the godly feel as if they were perspiring in an agony of fear; e) because they resist these thoughts. (6) Trials are not a sign of the anger, but of the grace of God. Persons thus afflicted nevertheless have a gracious God, as may be seen in the instance of Job. God has not departed from them; He is still in their hearts, but He hides Himself from them.

(7) When these thoughts come, the soul, like a house into

which fire-balls are thrown, makes its stand by suffering and not by acting. Accordingly, let the afflicted but keep silent and not utter the evil thoughts in words, nor readily tell them to unbelievers, lest he give any one offense. (8) He must continue to contradict these thoughts and say: It is not so; I am not damned. Satan is damned; I am redeemed. The wicked word (in me) is not mine; I do not approve it; away with it from my heart! I belong to God; God is mine. Who shall separate us?

(9) By blasphemous thoughts we must not suffer ourselves to be prevented from prayer and the reading of God's Word, but we should rather pray and read often. (10) Since persons thus afflicted declare that they would prefer walking on thorns and suffering pains in their body to these thoughts, yea, since they are also on their guard against sins and evil works, it is an incontrovertible proof that faith, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, indeed, the entire holy Trinity is still in their hearts. (11) Even if they can neither pray nor think of God on account of these evil thoughts, still their very complaint is a prayer and their sighing a certain sign of the presence of God in their hearts. For this yearning arises from indwelling grace; yea, in their sighing and moaning they pray most vigorously, zealously, and effectually.

(12) Although they imagine that by whatsoever they do they provoke God to anger, God does not take this ill; He regards their will and desire. They imagine that they are farthest removed from God, and they are closest to Him. They imagine that they are the most wicked people, and they are the most faithful. They imagine themselves cast away, and they are God's darlings. (13) They should patiently endure; for there is no instance of God's having forsaken such afflicted souls. He rather gladdens, refreshes, and comforts them again. But they must await the proper time, just as a disease must be permitted to run its course; bye and bye it will disappear, abate, and finally cease. That has been the experience of godly persons hitherto.

(14) These trials make a person humble, devout, cautious, and pious, so that he does not readily do or speak evil. Yea, this affliction will purify the heart from evil habits and practises, from lukewarmness in prayer and in hearing the divine Word. Is not that a glorious benefit derived from it? (15) These reasons we should consider point by point, or have friends of God explain

them to us, and at the same time we should use medicines for our body, work diligently, and go out walking with Christians in the open air, in the gardens and fields. We should not remain alone, but always have Christian people, children, or servants about us all the time, except when we wish to engage in prayer. To join in singing a hymn with those present is also edifying. Moreover, Romans 8 and Psalms 28 and 88 should be read diligently.

PRAYER.

O Thou holy God, who inhabitest the praises of Israel, and whom all the holy angels and elect praise and exalt without ceasing, I, an afflicted soul, confess to Thee with truly sorrowful heart that I am violently hindered in the praise of Thy holy name by wicked and blasphemous thoughts, which often, yea, daily, arise in my heart. Thou, all-knowing God, knowest well that they fall upon me like flying arrows, that they distress and frighten me. But Thou knowest also that I am alarmed at this and shed bitter tears because I have to endure these fiery darts.

O my God, do not charge against me what is done against my will! Thou seest how I fight and wrestle, how I sigh, how I abhor these thoughts, and how gladly I would drive them from my heart. O Lord, do not let Thy hand become too heavy upon me, lest I perish! I will cheerfully drink the cup which Thou, my dear Father, hast poured out for me. Only let it not be a cup of Thy wrath, but of Thy grace. Be merciful to me; for I am weak. Oh, how I am terrified when I perceive that the evil hour is about to commence! Do not cast me away on this account; for I cannot change this condition, but have to endure it.

However, Thy right hand, O Most High, can alter everything. Quicken me, O Triune God, and when the evil hour and my anguish are past, let me experience again Thy holy presence and Thy rich consolation. Yea, in the midst of my distress whisper into my heart a comforting passage to which I may cling, and by means of which I may raise myself up and gallantly defend myself. If my misery is to last a long time, give me also great patience, much power, and strength. Let not my faith fail, but bear witness to my spirit that I am nevertheless Thy child and an heir of life eternal.

O my God, I will gladly endure this trial also, because I know that Thou hast sent it, not for my destruction, but for my awakening unto whatsoever is good, for my purification from sin, evil practises, and worldly habits, and for the sanctification of my life. Shall I not drink the cup which the Father gives me to drink? Does it not come from loving hands? This fire is to consume the evil lusts and the Old Adam in my heart, and consecrate it to Thee, O great God, for a temple and a dwelling. Therefore I say in the midst of my anguish: Thou art still my Father, my Deliverer, my Helper, and my faithful Defender. Send into my heart the power of Thy Holy Spirit, that it may help me fight and overcome. Thou hast said: None that wait upon Me shall be ashamed. Lord, I trust in Thee; let me never be put to shame. Deliver me by Thy righteousness; hasten my help. Be Thou my strong Rock, for an house of defense to save me. For Thy name's sake lead me and guide me. Thou hast said that Thy kindness shall not depart from me, and

that mercy shall be built up for me forever. O Lord, Lord, let now this light arise also for me that I may behold my delight in Thy grace. O my Father, let Thy hour come when Thou wilt remove from me the anxiety of my soul. Strengthen me; help me; guard my heart as with a wall; surround it like the house of Job that the evil thoughts at last can no longer enter it, yea, that by Thy power I may learn to despise them. Thou, O faithful God, wilt not suffer me to be tried above that I am able. Alleviate my anguish, and I will also accept that as a help, until Thou shalt finally deliver me from it altogether in due time. O Jesus, Fountain of all grace, Thou castest out no one that comes to Thee burdened with infirmity, but givest comfort to all. Even though their faith be as small as a mustard-seed, Thou wilt esteem them worthy to remove great mountains.

In Thee, Lord, have I put my trust, Leave me not helpless in the dust, Let me not be confounded; Let in Thy Word My faith, O Lord, Be always firmly grounded. Amen.

ALL THINGS SHALL WORK FOR GOOD.

When waves of sorrow round you roll, and dark as night your way,
No glimmering light across your path, and hope seems far away;
And when God's face you cannot see, rely upon His Word,
Hold fast, look up, have faith in Him —

All things shall work for good.

When your heart feels nigh to breaking, and you have to walk alone,
When friends are few and scattered, and all earthly joys are flown;
When you seem to walk in darkness, almost sinking 'neath your
load,

Hold fast, look up, have faith in God —

All things shall work for good.

When your friends misunderstand you, scan you with suspicious eye,
 And when they misinterpret the cause of heartfelt sigh;
 If despised, cast out, forsaken, you tread a thorny road;
 Hold fast, look up, have faith in God —

All things shall work for good.

As the potter molds the vessel, as the gardener prunes the tree,
 The refiner tries the silver, till his likeness he can see;
 So when the Lord refines you, tries you with His chastening rod,
 Hold fast, look up, have faith in Him —

All things shall work for good.

Remember in your sorrow that the Lord is always nigh,
 Not a pang escapes His notice, He hears the faintest sigh;
 His love is everlasting, He's a sympathizing God.
 Hold fast, look up, have faith in Him —

All things shall work for good.

Follow the Savior's footsteps, and serve Him day by day,
 Keep ever close beside Him, though painful be the way;
 When you stand in glory, saved through His precious blood,
 You'll see that God has led you, and that

All things have worked for good.

PER PACEM AD LUCEM.

I do not ask, O Lord, that life may be
 A pleasant road;

I do not ask that Thou wouldst take from me
 Aught of its load;

I do not ask that flowers should always spring
 Beneath my feet;

I know too well the poison and the sting
 Of things too sweet.

For one thing only, Lord, dear Lord, I plead;
 Lead me aright —

Though strength should falter and though heart
 should bleed —

Through Peace to Light.

I do not ask, O Lord, that Thou shouldst shed
Full radiance here;
Give but a ray of peace that I may tread
Without a fear.

I do not ask my cross to understand,
My way to see;
Better in darkness just to feel Thy hand,
And follow Thee.

Joy is like restless day; but peace divine
Like quiet night;
Lead me, O Lord, till perfect day shall shine —
Through Peace to Light.

BOOK III.

For the Use of the Sick.

Morning Prayer of a Sick Person.

EXHORTATION.

As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. Evening, morning, and at noon will I pray and cry aloud; and He shall hear my voice. *Ps. 55, 16. 17.*

Although God permits a person to become sick, He does not on that account want him to cease praying; on the contrary, He wants him to pray the more eagerly. Yea, in proportion as the sickness grows more severe, prayer ought to become more fervent, as in the instance of Christ, according to the testimony of Luke, chap. 22, 44: "And being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly."

Now, if God has cast any one on a sick-bed, he should (1) at the dawn of day promptly lift up his heart to God and praise Him for the protection afforded during the night. If the night was sad and restless, He should call upon God for alleviation; if the night was quiet and tolerable, he should thank God for it. Having thus directed his heart to God in the morning, he should (2) bring before Him his petition and commit himself for the day to the protection and guardian care of God, diligently think of God, and patiently suffer what God sends him.

(3) At the same time he should bear in mind that Jesus is with him also on his sick-bed, there to comfort and sustain him, yea, to teach and instruct him. Perhaps the sick person, while in health, was not diligent in attending church or devout in prayer; of this fault God wishes to remind him, in order that he may pray the more fervently now, and perceive that he lacks comfort and edification because he has not gathered a supply and goodly store of comforting passages and prayers in his days of prosperity. But if he has been a lover of God and His Word, God wishes to show him by means of his sickness how he is to reduce to practise what he has heard regarding patience, trust in God, resignation, and submission under the will of God.

PRAYER.

O holy Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, at the break of day I come before Thy most holy throne and thank Thee that once more Thou hast let me live to see this day. Thou knowest, Lord, how I have passed the night on my sick-bed. Still I cannot sufficiently praise Thy goodness for having again permitted me to see the light of the sun and made all pain and discomfort to pass away. O Thou God of love, I thank Thee for Thy protection and help. Thine eye has watched over me this night; Thy hand has covered me; Thy grace has sustained me. O my God, the sun is rising again; let Thy grace also rise anew upon me. Give me this day new strength, new grace, and new patience to bear my affliction willingly.

O Lord, my God, it has pleased Thee to cast me upon this sick-bed. So be it; I will remain on it as long as it pleases Thee. Perhaps it is Thy design to separate me from my habitual sins and my ordinary labor, in order that Thou mayest speak with me in private, and teach and instruct me how to care for my soul. Now I have time to examine my past life, and to see whether I have served Thee, honored Thee, obeyed Thee, in order that I may mourn over it, feel ashamed in Thy presence, and sincerely repent, and that I may enter into a covenant with Thee, and thus work out my salvation with fear and trembling.

Grant, O Jesus, that throughout this day I may have my heart close to Thee, pray fervently, reflect upon Thy wounds, Thy blood, and Thy death, and consider the true salvation and eternal happiness

of my soul. O my God, whisper into my heart one beautiful text after the other that can bring me comfort, assure me of Thy fatherly love, seal Thy grace to me, and certify to me Thy speedy help.

Preserve me this day from sudden accidents, new pains, hours of sadness, and all sorts of suffering. Refresh me when I am faint; strengthen me by Thy Holy Spirit in my weakness. But if it is Thy will that I should endure pain and suffering this day, then abide with me and do not part from me. Help me to close this day in a happy and blessed state of mind, and to accept whatever Thou mayest lay upon me with resignation and quiet courage. Behold, my God, here I am; do with me as it pleases Thee. Thou art my Father, I am Thy child; Thou canst preserve my life and gladden me with Thy help. At eventide I will thank Thee for Thy goodness and with all my heart praise Thy mercy for all that Thou hast done for me.

Wholly to Thy blest protection I commit my heart and mind. Mighty God, to Thy direction Wholly may I be resigned. Lord, my Shield, my Light divine, O accept and own me Thine! Lord, to me Thine angel sending, Keep me from the subtle foe; From his craft and might defending, Never let Thy wand'rer go, Till my final rest shall come, And Thine angel bear me home. Amen.

HYMN.

What can it mean? Is it aught to Him
That the nights are long and the days are dim?
Can He be touched by the griefs I bear,
Which sadden the heart and whiten the hair?
Around His throne are eternal calms,
And strong, glad music of happy psalms,
And bliss unruffled by any strife,
How can He care for my little life?

And yet I want Him to care for me
While I live in this world where the sorrows be.
When the lights die down from the path I take,
When strength is feeble and friends forsake.
When love and music that once did bless
Have left me 'to silence and loneliness,
And my life-song changes to sobbing prayers,
Then my heart cries out for a God who cares.

When shadows hang o'er me the whole day long
And my spirit is bowed with shame and wrong;
When I am not good, and the deeper shade
Of conscious sin makes my heart afraid,
And the busy world has too much to do
To stay in its course to help me through,
And I long for a Savior — can it be
That the God of the universe cares for me?

O wonderful story of deathless love!
Each child is dear to that heart above.
He fights for me when I cannot fight,
He comforts me in the gloom of night,
He lifts the burden, for He is strong,
He stills the sigh and awakens the song;
The sorrow that bowed me down He bears,
And loves and pardons because He cares.

Let all who are sad take heart again;
We are not alone in our hours of pain;
Our Father stoops from His throne above
To soothe and quiet us with His love;
He leaves us not when the storm is high
And we have safety, for He is nigh.
Can it be trouble which He doth share?
O rest in peace, for the Lord does care!

Evening Prayer of a Sick Person.

EXHORTATION.

I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and He gave ear unto me. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord; my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God and was troubled; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. *Ps. 77, 1—3.*

When a person ponders the thousand different accidents with which he may meet by day as well as by night, he surely ought never to rise or retire without commending himself, body and soul, to the mighty protection of his gracious God. A sick person in particular should do this. If God has helped him on his sick-bed through the day, he should (1) thank God for His gracious aid. If God has blessed the medicine, if He has made the suffering tolerable through the day, the patient should heartily thank Him for it. At the same time he should ask forgiveness if he has sinned against God by murmuring and impatience. When night approaches, which sick persons in particular dread, he should (2) come before God again with his prayer and beseech Him graciously to ward off every calamity, every dangerous and painful accident.

Having thus commended himself, body and soul, to God, he should (3) not doubt that the Triune God will be his light and the strength of his life also during the night, will keep guard at his bedside, tend and keep him, and for the sake of Jesus' blood and death forgive him his sins and be gracious to him. Even if it be appointed unto him to die during the night, the Triune God will enfold him with His gracious presence, and cause his soul to be conducted to heaven by His holy angels. With such good thoughts the sick person should consign himself entirely to the divine wisdom, love, and grace.

PRAYER.

O merciful God, I have lived through another day. O Lord, Lord, according to Thy goodness Thou hast spared my life until this hour; my heart shall praise and thank Thee for Thy fatherly faithfulness. Especially do I praise Thy name because

Thou hast helped me bear my pain and sickness this day. O Lord, Thou layest burdens upon us, but Thou also helpest us to bear them. He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues of death. Though the Lord cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. The Lord is gracious, good, and kind to all who call upon Him. He delivereth the needy when he crieth, and hideth not Himself from his supplication.

O mighty God, it is turning night, the evening is at hand. Therefore I turn to Thee in prayer, saying: O my Father, abide with me and do not depart from me this night! Yea, give Thine angel charge that he come and keep guard over us, Thine own, and send us the heavenly watchmen that we may be secure from Satan. Thus we shall sleep in Thy name while the angels are with us, and shall bless Thee, the Holy Trinity, forevermore. Ward off from me this night all dangerous and sudden accidents, soothe my pains, guard me against terror, fright, and calamity. O heavenly Father, do remain with Thy sick child; for if Thou dost grant me Thy gracious presence, I am not afraid. The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? O Jesus, the sun is setting and departing from us; but do not Thou depart from us, O Sun of Righteousness. O my Jesus, fold me in Thine arms this night. Let Thy left hand be under my head, and let Thy right hand cover me. Grant that I may fall asleep thinking of Thee, and sleeping delight myself in the blood which Thou didst shed for me. Let me rejoice in Thy wounds and find in

them consolation, forgiveness of sins, and refreshing for my soul. O precious Holy Ghost, all, except a few, are leaving me; but do Thou, O Comfort of the afflicted and Succor of the distressed, remain with me; strengthen me, keep me in true faith and Christian patience. O Holy Trinity, grant me Thy protection. The Lord bless me and keep me; the Lord make His face shine upon me and be gracious unto me; the Lord lift up His countenance upon me and give me peace.

Should this night prove the last for me In this dark vale of tears,
Then lead me, Lord, in heaven to Thee And my elect compeers.
And thus I live and die to Thee, Strong Lord of Hosts, indeed!
In life and death Thou helpst me From every fear and need. Amen.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

Cross of Christ, my Refuge!
Cross of Christ, my Peace!
As the nights grow longer,
As the days decrease,
Draw me closer, closer,
Till temptations cease.

Be my one Companion,
Be my only Guide,
Be my Strength in weakness
When the flesh is tried;
Shield me from the tempter,
Turn the world aside.

Let Thy tender shadow
Fall across my way,
Hiding all my footsteps,
Stumbling or astray;
On the path before me
Shed a cheering ray.

The Sick Person Prays God for Patience.

EXHORTATION.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God. *Ps. 42, 11.*

"Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise," we read Heb. 10, 36. And surely, whoever would do the will of God must not be obstinate and self-willed, but patient and resigned. To patience, however, the sick person should be moved especially (1) by the example of Christ, who in the greatest pains did not open His mouth, but was like a lamb. Accordingly, if we would be like Him in glory, we must also suffer patiently as He did.

The sick person (2) should consider that his sickness is sent him in accordance with God's will; for without the will of God not a sparrow can fall upon the earth, not a hair can fall from our head; how much less can such a heavy burden and sickness be laid upon us without God! To patience the sick person should (3) be moved by God's love and omnipotence. What God lays upon us He can also remove; if He speaks one word, the sick become well again. (4) The sick person should consider that by his sins he has deserved much severer afflictions and greater pains. Accordingly, instead of yielding to impatience, he should rather humble himself in true repentance and faith before God, and implore His mercy. (5) The sick person should reflect that impatience does not lighten the cross, but makes it heavier. Yea, God has promised that He will help us bear the cross which He has laid upon us. He will with the temptation also make a way to escape that we may be able to bear it.

PRAYER.

Merciful God, gracious Father, behold, a poor human being, I am lying here on my sick-bed, and cannot move from it. But I come to Thee and appear before Thy lofty throne. Alas, it has pleased Thee in Thy fatherly goodness to afflict me with this suffering and to send me this sickness in the place of health which I enjoyed hitherto. Now therefore,

my God and Father, let Thy will be done. Give me patience that I may bear all without murmuring and without rebelling. God oft gave me days of gladness, Shall I grieve If He give Seasons, too, of sadness? God is good, and tempers ever Every hurt; Me desert Wholly can He never. Since I have received good at Thy hands, since I have often been refreshed and gladdened by Thee in days of health, I will also by Thy power accept in patience these days of sickness and suffering, and will humbly recall to my mind how many happy hours of health I have enjoyed in my life, in comparison with which these few hours of suffering are to be esteemed lightly, yea, as nothing.

I know, my God, that Thou art kind and gracious; therefore Thou wilt not lay upon me more than I can bear. I cling to Thy Word, which says: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." My God, Thou also knowest full well my ability and my weakness; therefore Thou wilt adjust my suffering to my strength. Behold Thy weak and sick child, and deal with me according to Thy fatherly love. I do not refuse to suffer because I know that Thou dost not harbor thoughts of evil against me, and because suffering is to serve for my sanctification. My God, here I am; do with me as Thou wilt. Give me to understand rightly Thy holy counsel: that this sickness is to be fire that is to consume and take away the impurities which still are in my soul, and to purify me; that it is to be a bell rousing me to repentance, that I may think of my sins and feel heartily sorry

for them; that it is to be a bell calling me to prayer, that I may seek forgiveness for all my transgressions for Jesus' sake, for the sake of His blood and death; yea, that it is to be a voice summoning me: Set thy house in order; think of thy death and thy grave; prepare for eternity!

Be it so; make me ready, then, and prepared, as Thou wouldst have me to be yonder in eternity. For I know that after the sufferings of this present time there shall follow an eternal and exceeding great weight of glory. Therefore be still, my soul; why art thou cast down and disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; yea, hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God.

Whate'er God will, let that be done; His will is ever wisest; His grace will all thy hope outrun Who to that faith arisest. The gracious Lord Will help afford, He chastens with forbearing; Who God believes, And to Him cleaves, Shall not be left despairing. My God is my sure Confidence, My Hope, and my Existence; His counsel is beyond my sense, Yet I'll not make resistance, His Word declares The very hairs Upon my head are numbered; His mercy large Holds me in charge With care that never slumbered. Amen.

HYMN.

Not always can I feel the Savior's guiding,
Nor hear Him speaking words of cheer the while;
Not always does the sunlight seem abiding
As when I see His tender, loving smile.
But some bright day when I from earth shall sever,
That wondrous smile on me shall then abide;
And then from out His presence, wand'ring never —
"I shall be satisfied."

Sometimes how rough the way, dark shadows bending
Above my weary head as on I go,
Life's toilsome journeys slowly, sadly wending,
The throes of grief encompass me below,

A little while my heart with pain shall quiver,
 A little while by sterile woe be tried.
 When I awake beyond the silent river —
 "I shall be satisfied."

All doubt at rest, all mournful discord banished,
 All trivial strife and disappointment o'er;
 With those beloved, long from earth's fireside vanished,
 Safe in the Father's Home forevermore,
 Tempted no more on worldly crowns to ponder,
 And to forget Him who for me hath died.
 If I behold Him in the light up yonder —
 "I shall be satisfied."

The Sick Person Prays for God's Assistance.

EXHORTATION.

Behold, God is mine Helper; the Lord is with them that uphold my soul. *Ps. 54, 4.*

It is a great comfort in times of suffering and in misfortune to have a good friend who aids us. Now it may happen that a person in distress, or a stranger, or a needy person has no one to aid him and say to him, How are you? Still, we Christians know for a certainty that God will come to the assistance of all who are in distress. For (1) God has promised help and grace to all His children; therefore a sick person should not lose heart when he sees that all men forsake him, that no one is concerned about him, and should firmly believe that God will not forsake him, but will send him help and deliverance at the right time.

(2) When a sick person has good friends and is not without means, but finds that these avail him nothing, he should still not lose courage or doubt the divine promises, but be assured that in all his gloomy hours of grief God will be near him to aid him.

(3) The sick person will become aware of the divine help either when his life is spared, or his pains become endurable, or he receives strength from God to endure even the severest suffering. Yea, God is faithful; He is often near us when we imagine Him far from us.

PRAYER.

O faithful God, Thou beholdest me now in a wretched and sad condition. My strength is failing, my body is wasting away, and the burden of my cross weighs upon me more heavily. Lord, O Lord, my God, who hearest my supplications and to whom my affliction is not unknown, I pray Thee fervently, do abide with me, and do not forsake me! I appeal to Thy promises in which Thou hast said assuringly to me: "Fear not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." And again: "I will not leave thee nor forsake thee." O my God, upon this word of Thine I rely.

I need Thy aid greatly; I cannot endure my affliction unless Thou abidest with me and wilt help me bear it. Unless Thy hand sustain me, I shall soon be choked and crushed by my sickness. Remember that I was formed from the dust; how soon will this earthly mold of my body be broken; how quickly I am sinking; how fast my life is ebbing away; how soon all will be over with me, unless Thy divine power and Thy fatherly hand support me, and Thou wilt come to my aid according to Thy mercy and gracious promise! Thy succor is a great comfort to me; for if Thou art with me, O my God, I am not afraid. If it is a comfort to me when some of my good friends not only are about me during the day, but also watch with me during the night, how much more comforting is it to me if Thou, O my God, art with me! Men may pity me and sympathize with me, but if Thou art with me, I have the

best Helper, Deliverer, and Physician at my side. Thy most holy presence will refresh and sustain me, soothe my pains, and quiet my anguish.

Oh, then, do not forsake me, nor withdraw Thine hand from me, O God of my salvation. If a loving mother does not quit her sick child, neither wilt Thou, O my God, depart from me. Let me feel Thy gracious presence by an inward joy, by some comforting passage of Scripture that strengthens me, by some sweet thought. Comfort me in my suffering as one is comforted by his mother. O my God, make my faith firm, sustain my strength, help me to fight and overcome. By Thy help I become strong in weakness. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

O Lord, I love Thee from my heart; I pray Thee, ne'er from me depart, With tender mercy cheer me; I scorn the richest earthly lot, E'en heav'n and earth attract me not, If only Thou be near me. Yea, though my heart be like to break, Thou shalt my Trust that naught can shake, My Portion and my Comfort be, Who by Thy blood hast purchased me, Lord, Jesus Christ! My God and Lord, my God and Lord! Forsake me not who trusts Thy Word. Amen.

HYMN.

I look to Thee in every need, and never look in vain;
I feel Thy strong and tender love, and all is well again.

The thought of Thee is mightier far
Than sin and pain and sorrow are.

Discouraged in the work of life, disheartened by its load,
Shamed by its failures or its fears, I sink beside the road;
But let me only think of Thee,
And then new heart springs up in me.

Thy calmness bends serene above my restlessness to still;
Around me flows Thy quickening life to nerve my faltering will;
Thy presence fills my solitude,
Thy providence turns all to good.

The Sick Person Calls to Mind that He Is Human and Mortal.

EXHORTATION.

Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. *Job 14, 1. 2.*

Although all men are mortal, although men die and are buried every day, still the majority of them never reflect upon their mortality, especially in their days of health and prosperity. Therefore God must remind them occasionally that they will have to die. This He does by means of sickness; for when He causes the healthy to grow weak, the beautiful roses to wilt, giants to become faint by sickness, it is then that they become aware of their transitory condition.

Accordingly, sincere Christians should (1) reflect upon their mortality every day when they undress and put on their night-clothes; they should then say in their heart: Thus I will also be undressed and wrapped in my shroud, when I have died. However, when God afflicts a person with sickness, he should again call to mind his approaching death. It is a delusion of Satan when people imagine that they will not die, if they do not think of death; for whether we think of it or not, our end comes whenever it pleases God. But he has a more blessed departure who prepares for dying in peace. A person should (2) remind himself of his mortality by thinking of his ancestors and friends who have died, and should believe that some time his turn, too, will come. Therefore, blessed is he who (3) apprehends Jesus Christ by faith while reflecting upon his mortality, and who continues until death in a Christian and godly life. He will not die when he dies, but will reach the end of his faith, namely, the salvation of his soul.

PRAYER.

My God, it has pleased Thee in accordance with Thy holy counsel and will to lay me upon this sick-bed, and thus, not only to draw me away from my business, my sins, and sinful habits, and to call me to sincere repentance, but also to remind me that I am a mortal and must die. Behold, Thou hast

made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before Thee; verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity.

My God, since sickness is a forerunner of death, I am strongly reminded that I am a human being and mortal. I am dust, and must return to dust. Accordingly, I look upon my open grave as upon a mother's lap in which Thou wilt let me calmly rest and sleep. I know also that it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment. For this reason I have often prayed in my days of health: O Lord, make me to know mine end and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am. I know also that I must leave everything, my property and estate, my honor and fortune, and all that I possess in this world. I have here no continuing city, but I seek one to come.

If it is Thy intention now by this sickness to remind me of my end, as Thou didst remind King Hezekiah, and to call to me as to him: Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live; oh, then grant that I may reflect cheerfully upon my mortality and my end. Let me dwell on such thoughts as these: Ah, perhaps I shall not quit this bed, and this may be the last year of my life. Perhaps this sickness is to indicate to me that the days of my life, which Thou hast written in Thy book, are past, in order that I may prepare to die in peace by prayer, repentance and faith, and an honest inquiry into the life which I have spent hitherto. Yea, make me understand, O my God, that I do not have to die because I have prepared for dying in peace, but that I am to be drawn away from the world and

from sin by such preparation, and that my life, spirit, and soul become consecrated to Thee by it; yea, that for this very purpose Thou hast sent this sickness to me, that I may thus prove and examine myself, turn from sin, prepare myself, die unto the world, and live in Thee. Behold, my God, here I am; receive my soul, but first prepare me well here in time, in order that at my dying I may be found in Thy grace and die in peace.

The time has come when, at His will, My life in this world ceases; I think upon it, and am still, Let come whate'er He pleases. To Him I trust My soul, my dust, When flesh and spirit sever, The Christ we sing Has plucked the sting Away from death forever. Amen.

HYMN.

When my last hour is close at hand,
And I must hence betake me,
Lord Jesus Christ, beside me stand,
Nor let Thy help forsake me;
To Thy blest hands I now commend
My soul, at this my earthly end,
And Thou wilt safely keep it.

My sins, dear Lord, disturb me sore,
My conscience cannot slumber;
But though as sands upon the shore
My sins may be in number,
I will not quail, but think of Thee;
Thy death, Thy sorrow, borne for me,
Thy suff'rings shall uphold me.

I have been grafted in the Vine,
And hence my comfort borrow,
For Thou wilt surely keep me Thine
Through fear, and pain, and sorrow;
Yea, though I die, I die to Thee,
Who through Thy death hast won for me
The right to life eternal.

Since Thou from death didst rise again,
 In death Thou wilt not leave me;
 Lord, Thy ascension soothes my pain,
 No fear of death shall grieve me;
 For Thou wilt have me where Thou art,
 And so with joy I can depart
 To be with Thee forever.

And so I stretch mine arms to Thee,
 And gladly hence betake me;
 Peaceful and calm my sleep shall be,
 No human voice can wake me.
 But Christ is with me through the strife,
 And He will bear me into life,
 And open heav'n before me.

The Sick Person Resigns Himself to the Will of God, to Live or Die.

EXHORTATION.

And Jesus went a little farther, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt. *Matt. 26, 39.*

"God's will is always the best," we are in the habit of saying. However, when we are to submit to God's will solely and alone and to be satisfied with what is contrary to our own will, we often feel a great repugnance to this. Accordingly, a person whom God has laid on his sick-bed should (1) reflect that it is by God's will that he is in such a condition. Therefore he should beware of impatience; otherwise he would show that he is not satisfied with God's will. (2) He should look at the example of Jesus Christ, who said in spite of His greatest sufferings and agony which forced from Him sweat that was like drops of blood: Father, not My will, but Thine, be done! Such resignation and submission to His will is well-pleasing to God and a mark of His children.

Yea, (3) even if a person were to resist God's will constantly, he would not achieve anything; if God has decreed that we shall not rise from our sick-bed, we shall not prevent this by our

obstinacy, but the counsel and will of the Lord will be executed upon us nevertheless. Therefore, (4) it is best of all for a sick person to say: Behold, Lord, here I am; do unto me as it seems good to Thee. I am willing to live longer, if such is Thy pleasure; I am also glad to die, if that is Thy will.

PRAYER.

O gracious, kind, and merciful God, I come now before Thy most holy throne with my prayer and sighing, though my body is confined to my sick-bed. I see, O my God, that it is Thy will that I should lie sick and be deprived for a season of the precious gift of health. Be it so; since such is Thy will, it shall be mine also. If this pleases Thee, I, too, shall be pleased. Thy will and mine shall be but one will. I was born in accordance with Thy will; I am also willing to die whenever it pleases Thee. According to Thy will I have enjoyed good health a long time; in accordance with Thy good pleasure I am now willing to be sick as long as Thou shalt deem it profitable and good for my soul. Yea, my God, even if I could regain my health contrary to Thy will, I would not choose that, but would rather fulfil Thy gracious counsel upon my sick-bed.

In my present condition, therefore, I shall say with my Jesus: Father, not my will, but Thine, be done. If I am to live longer in this world, I shall continue praising Thee; yea, the years which Thou wilt add to my life I shall spend to Thy glory and in true godliness. But if it is Thy pleasure that I shall not rise from this bed, but shall die of this sickness, prepare me for dying in peace. I know that my earthly house of this tabernacle must be dissolved some time; but I know also that Thou hast prepared for those that believe in Thee a house

not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. In heaven is my heritage, my fatherland, my citizenship. Shall I not be glad to enter upon my inheritance, to hasten to my fatherland, and to enjoy the glory of the children of God? Though I have reason to pray that my life may be prolonged and preserved, still I am in a sore strait by this other question, whether it would not be better to be loosed from my body and to be with Christ, to behold my Jesus, whom I loved when as yet I had not seen Him. Therefore, my God, I leave all to Thee; Thou knowest best what is salutary for me. Behold, here I am; do with me, O Lord, according to Thy good pleasure.

Lord, as Thou wilt, deal Thou with me, No other wish I cherish; In life and death I cling to Thee, O Lord, let me not perish! Let but Thy grace ne'er from me part, Else as Thou wilt; grant patient heart: Thy will the best is ever. Amen.

HYMN.

Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
However dark it be!
Lead me by Thine own hand,
Choose Thou my path for me.
I dare not choose my lot:
I would not, if I might.
Choose Thou for me, my God,
So shall I walk aright.

The kingdom that I seek
Is Thine; so let the way
That leads to it be Thine,
Else I must surely stray.
Take Thou my cup, and it
With joy or sorrow fill
As best to Thee may seem;
Choose Thou my good and ill.

Choose Thou for me my friends,
My sickness or my health;
Choose Thou my cares for me,
My poverty or wealth.
Not mine, not mine, the choice,
In things or great or small;
Be Thou my Guide, my Strength,
My Wisdom and my All.

The Sick Person Realizes that the Cross and Affliction Come from God.

EXHORTATION.

The Lord killeth and maketh alive; He bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up. 1 Sam. 2, 6.

God is Love; He loves men fervently. Every day believing Christians receive proofs of His love by the gracious help and the blessings which come to them from His hand. They also behold it in His great works of love, creation, redemption, and sanctification. But if God is Love, it affords a great comfort to a sick person when he says to himself: (1) My affliction does not come from an enemy who hates me, but from a God who loves me. It comes from a Father who since the days of my youth has furnished me help in many dangers and accidents.

If this fact is firmly established in the soul, then there follows from it (2) a glorious comfort: The Father never intends evil for His child; the Lover of men has retained a heart abounding in love even in the afflictions which He sends the child. In view of these facts the sick person (3) should take heart in reliance upon God; he should diligently call upon God and pray. He should lay his weary head in God's lap, look up to heaven with joy and cheerful courage, and say to himself: Though a heavy cross I'm bearing, And my heart Feels the smart, Shall I be despairing? God can help me who doth send it, He doth know All my woe, And how best to end it. Especially should he (4) not permit himself to be led astray by the severity of his sickness, his great pains, and his seeming danger; for here again this comfort-

ing reflection is well grounded: God lays upon us our crosses, but He daily bears our burdens. He that is our God is the God of salvation, and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death. Ps. 68, 20.

PRAYER.

O Lord God, who art merciful, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; who forgivest iniquity, transgression, and sin; who dost not keep Thine anger forever, but lookest upon the afflicted and raisest up them that are bowed down: behold, I, a poor mortal, lie here before Thee and pray: Oh, look upon me from Thy exalted throne and hear me! I know and believe that my affliction and tribulation come from Thee. Thy hand wounds, but it also heals; it makes sore, but it also binds up.

But since my sickness is sent me from heaven, I, in turn, rightly look to heaven for help. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help; my help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth. I have received health, life, and prosperity from Thy hands; why, then, should I not accept this sickness also? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? The trees in the field, in their season, are in full bloom, gloriously adorned with foliage and fruit, basking in the sun and being warmed by its rays. But in winter they look desolate and dead; they have to endure storms and frost; and all this comes from Thee, O God. Therefore I, too, shall bear in mind that this is the time of my suffering and affliction which Thou hast decreed and appointed for me. Yea, as Thou knowest the place of every star, whether it is high or low in the heavens, just so Thou knowest also my present condition.

Thou knowest how heavy my burden is; it is known to Thee how long I have been afflicted; and it is also known to Thee how much strength I have to endure all this.

Oh, then, lay upon me, Thou kind God, as much as Thou wilt; only give me power and strength that I may be able to bear it. I know that without Thy will not a hair can fall from my head, how much less can I become sick without Thy will? If not even a sparrow falls upon the ground without Thy will, how much less can I become subject to pains, discomfort, and sickness, yea, how much less can I die without Thy counsel and will! If my affliction comes from Thee, it comes from my Father; if it comes from my Father, it comes from loving hands and a loving heart, not for my destruction, but for the welfare of my soul.

Correct me, my Father; however, with moderation, lest I be utterly consumed. Send me grief; however, make me also to rejoice in turn. When Thou hidest Thy face from me, make it to shine again. Let Thy face shine upon me, and I shall recover. I will gladly fall into the hands of my Father when I have deserved punishment; for His anger endures but for a moment, and in His favor is life. He will have compassion upon Zion, and be gracious to His child.

My Father! cheering name! O may I call Thee mine! Give me with humble hope to claim A portion so divine. Whate'er Thy will denies, I calmly would resign; For Thou art just, and good, and wise, — O bend my will to Thine! Whate'er Thy will ordains, O give me strength to bear; Still let me know a Father reigns, And trust a Father's care. Thy ways are little known To my weak, erring sight; Yet shall my soul, believing, own That all Thy ways are right. Amen.

HYMN.

God would never send you the darkness
If He felt you could bear the light;
But you would not cling to His guiding hand
If the way were always bright;
And you would not care to walk by faith,
Could you always walk by sight.

'Tis true, He has many an anguish
For your sorrowful heart to bear,
And many a cruel thorn-crown
For your tired head to wear;
He knows how few would reach heaven at all
If pain did not guide them there.

So He sends you the blinding darkness
And the furnace of sevenfold heat;
'Tis the only way, believe me,
To keep you close to His feet;
For 'tis always so easy to wander
When our lives are glad and sweet.

Then nestle your hand in your Father's,
And sing of Him as you go;
Your song may cheer those around you
Whose courage is sinking low;
And, well, if your lips do quiver —
God will love you better so.

The Sick Person Realizes the Usefulness of His Sickness.

EXHORTATION.

This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby. *John 11, 4.*

That sicknesses can be of great usefulness natural man refuses to believe; for he says: "Not only is the body made faint, enfeebled, and in peril of death, but its powers, too, are weakened, not to mention other discomforts and the expense connected with sickness." However, notwithstanding all this, sickness has its uses,

sometimes even for the body, inasmuch as not infrequently natural impurities are consumed by it, and a person's health becomes sounder than before.

However, sickness is of glorious usefulness especially to the soul; for (1) by means of it God brings many a person back from his sinful ways. How many a sinner lives unconcerned in his wantonness, regarding neither God nor His Word, and heaping sin upon sin! But by sickness, pain, and suffering God arrests many such persons, as it were, by force recalling them to their senses, so that they are recovered out of the snares of Satan. (2) Sickness, moreover, is of use to the godly; for by it they learn to know the almighty power, goodness, wisdom, love, and mercy of God, all of which they indeed knew well enough before and believed it, but are now first coming to realize.

(3) Besides, after sickness a greater love toward God, greater fervor in prayer, a greater sincerity in their Christian conduct can be observed among the godly. They learn to submit themselves to God, to reflect on death, to prepare for a departure in peace, to think much of heaven, yea, to commend their souls into God's hands. If a sick person bears these things in mind, he will be well satisfied with God even in sickness.

PRAYER.

Dear God and Father, I perceive quite plainly Thy holy counsel concerning me, namely, that this is to be my year of suffering, my week of suffering, yea, my season of suffering, when the sun of my prosperity is to be clouded for a season, my health enfeebled, and my physical strength diminished. I thank Thee, my God, that before visiting me thus Thou hast made me to understand Thy ways, namely, that the way of the cross is also a way to heaven, and that Thou art doing good to our souls in sickness. I see plainly, my God, that Thou wouldst draw me away from the world. Thou wouldst make the world bitter and heaven sweet to me, in order that I may deny ungodliness and

worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; that I may prove and examine my life and turn to Thee by sincere repentance. Indeed, when we are in prosperity and know of no tribulation, we imagine that we are in the world only to amass earthly riches, or to be merry, sin, give entertainments, keep company with the world, and conform to its customs, ways, and manners. But since that would be the ruin of our soul and lead to eternal damnation, Thou art wont, in accordance with Thy faithfulness, occasionally to take us aside from the multitude in order to speak with us alone.

O my God, it seems that Thou wouldst now speak with me alone and tell me that I must beware of the sins, temptations, wickedness, and customs of the world. Thou wouldst persuade me to repent of the sins I have committed, not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by the renewing of my mind, that I may know which is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Well, then, my God, I will do this: if Thou wilt restore me to health, I will become more godly, will pray more zealously, shun evil, renounce my former evil habits, avoid the places where, and the persons with whom, I have sinned, and become a new man. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. If Thou hast seen, my God, that I have also been slothful in my Christian conduct, negligent in prayer, but willing to sin and ready to enjoy the pleasures of the world, Thou wouldst rouse me by this sickness to think of my salvation, and to rise from the sleep of sin. "Awake, thou that sleepest,"

Thou sayest to me, “and I will purify thee from thy former filth.”

Ah, I see that Thou wouldst by this sickness remind me of my death, and make me to know my end, in order that upon my recovery I may learn to know and praise Thy almighty power, love, and goodness, all of which would not be done if Thou hadst not visited me thus. O Lord, perform, then, the good work which Thou hast begun in me, for Thy glory and the salvation of my soul. Restore my soul to health by means of this bitter medicine. By these sharp cuts and pains heal the wounds of sin. With this sharp lotion wash away my naughtiness, and grant that I may humble myself before Thee in genuine repentance and living faith, and seek and find help, counsel, comfort, and forgiveness of sin in the wounds of Jesus.

Let heaven to me be ever sweet, And this world bitter let me find,
That I, 'mid all its toil and heat, May keep eternity in mind.
My God, for Jesus' sake I pray Thy peace may bless my dying day. Amen.

HYMN.

O my Father, be my stay
In the dark and cloudy day,
When the sunlight fades, and chill winds
moan.

When all earthly comfort fails,
When no earthly hope avails,
Let me lean on Thee, on Thee alone.

When, oppressed by care and grief,
I am longing for relief,
Ever seeking rest, and finding none,
O my Father, then in love
Every earthly prop remove,
Let me lean on Thee, on Thee alone.

O my Father, be my stay
 In the bright and sunny day,
 When the shades of grief and care have
 flown;
 Lest I then forget to bless
 Thee, Source of my happiness,
 Let me lean on Thee, on Thee alone.

By the comfort Thou dost lend,
 By Thy mercies without end,
 Teach me still with grateful heart to own
 'Tis a blessed thing for me
 Thus to feel my need of Thee,
 Thus to lean on Thee, on Thee alone.

The Sick Person Rests His Confidence on the Almighty Power of God.

EXHORTATION.

O Lord, my God, I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me. O Lord, Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave; Thou hast kept me alive that I should not go down to the pit. *Ps. 30, 2. 3.*

In dangerous situations nothing is more cheering and comforting than to have a good friend of whom one can say: I know he can help me, and he will help me. A sick person may not be able to say this of any human being, but he can be assured that God is such a friend.

A sick person may see the almighty power of God (1) in the examples of others. When he hears, reads, or recalls that God has raised the dead, and has even restored such as were sick unto death, he can confidently conclude: The almighty God, who gave help in those instances, is living still. (2) A sick person may reflect upon the unlimited might of the great God, which is greater than the power of all the kings in the world, yea, of all men. Accordingly, what is impossible with men is possible with God; what is too difficult for us is quite easy for God. (3) A sick person should consider that God does not lack means to help him. At His command the sickness must yield; He can so bless even the paltriest

herb or medicine that it must remove the evil in our sickness and promote our recovery.

When a sick person ponders these facts, he should (4) be quite at peace in God, persevere in prayer, and abide God's hour of deliverance. None the less he should (5) use medicines and remedies which are prescribed for him by his physicians, but should be on his guard against all superstitious practises, such as conjuring and jugglery, and be assured that the Almighty can and will surely help him when His hour is come.

PRAYER.

O my Lord and my God, Thou seest me encompassed with pain and suffering, and that my misery is renewed every morning. My sickness does not yield, and I know not but that this bed shall be my last couch. I commit this to Thy holy will; I am willing to live or to die whenever it pleases Thee. Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; the number of my years are with Thee; Thou hast appointed unto me bounds that I cannot pass. Thou hast recorded in Thy book the number of my days, when as yet there were none of them. Still I do not lose courage on that account, but lift up mine eyes unto the hills whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord. I know that Thou art an almighty God, that life and death are in Thy hands; but I know also that Thou canst raise the dead by Thy almighty power, restore men from the most dangerous sicknesses, and alleviate and remove the greatest misery and suffering. Indeed, the Lord's hand is not shortened; the Helper in Israel can reverse every anguish; yea, He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. He can deliver all who come to Him.

Therefore, on my present sick-bed I do not look

about me for puny men, nor at myself, for I am sick and miserable; but I look overhead, unto Thee, my God and Lord. I say now with the believing centurion: Lord, speak the word only, and Thy servant shall be healed. Yea, speak the word only, and I shall live; I shall be delivered from all my suffering. I know that with the Lord nothing is impossible. Lord, Thy almighty power is without limit; where is there a God like unto Thee? My God, Thou didst restore sick Hezekiah to health; Thou didst deliver the sick woman from her afflicted condition; Thou didst heal the palsied; Thou didst raise the young man. Graciously look also upon me, Thou mighty Protector of those who believe in Thee; help me also, have compassion on me, show me a token for good. Thou art my Helper and Deliverer; my God, do not tarry. However, do all as it pleases Thee. I know Thou art able by Thy almighty power, and willing by Thy goodness, to do it, if it is good for my soul. Meanwhile I pray to Thee in faith:

In God, my faithful God, I trust when dark my road; Though many woes o'ertake me, Yet He will not forsake me; His love it is doth send them, And when 'tis best will end them. Amen.

HYMN.

Be patient: though the day be wrought
By conflict keen, thy Lord is near,
To keep thee safe, however fraught
By outward stress or inward fear.

Thy Master felt the cruel thorn,
And heavy was the cross He bore,
With trusting faith, if care be worn,
Be patient yet, though heart be sore.

Above life's troubles bends the face
Of Him who ever whispers peace,
And when our souls His will embrace,
The ills of life forever cease.

Till daylight fades, sing thou thy psalm
Within each hour's unrest and care,
And teach thy spirit of the calm,
Which reigns supreme when Christ is there.

Not long to bear the cross, for, lo!
Life's day is speeding toward its close;
Upon the hills the sunset's glow
Doth herald now a blest repose.

A Sick Person Remembers His Baptismal Covenant.

EXHORTATION.

Baptism is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God. *1 Pet. 3, 21.*

If any name by which we refer to God is comforting, it is certainly the name *Father*; and if any glory that we can discover in man is great, it is certainly this: to be a child of God. Now, just as we can be cheered by this reflection all our life, we can also derive comfort from it in sickness. A sick person should not let this comfort slip from his heart.

He should reflect: (1) God is an almighty God, with whom nothing is impossible. (2) God is a faithful God, who means well with His children. (3) God is a wise Father, who can turn the bitterest cross into a wholesome medicine for His children. (4) God is a kind and loving Father, who may afflict His children, but has compassion on them again. When the sick person ponders this, he can derive a heartfelt joy from it.

Now, a Christian patient has attained to this glory of being a child of God by Holy Baptism, in which he entered into a covenant with the Triune God. This thought, now, should raise him up and cheer him; however, he should also (1) as a child readily leave all that happens to him to the disposition of his heavenly Father's will and counsel, not murmur against the Father, but

have the confidence that God will prove Himself a faithful Father. (2) If he has provoked the Father in heaven to anger in his days of health, and has at times lived like a child of the world, he should heartily pray God to forgive him while he is on his sick-bed, resolve upon a genuine change of life, and firmly believe that God will have compassion also on His sick child.

PRAYER.

Lord God Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, behold, I, Thy child, find myself in a condition where I know of no further help in all the world. I glance here and there, and inquire for help, but no one comes to my aid. But I shall not lose heart on that account, but rather go to my heavenly Father and pour out my grief before Him. If a sheep in distress hurries to the shepherd, a child to his father, a subject to his king, O my King, O my Father, O my Shepherd, I, too, come to Thee.

O Triune God, do remember that I have been baptized, and that in Baptism I entered into a covenant with Thee. In this covenant Thou didst promise to be my Father, and to provide for me like a father, help me, and act as a Father towards me. Jesus has washed me with His holy blood, and bestowed on me the garment of His perfect righteousness. The Holy Ghost has been poured upon me abundantly, is still crying in my heart, Abba, Father! and gives witness unto my spirit that I am a child of God.

O Triune God, behold, here a poor child is coming to Thee. My father and my mother forsake me; my relatives and friends cannot help me. Therefore, O my heavenly Father, do Thou take me up. If the centurion had compassion on his servant who lay sick unto death; if he was at pains to help him,

O my Father, do Thou also have compassion on me, and help me. As the father whose daughter lay at the point of death followed Jesus and said: "Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come and lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall live," I, too, my God and Father, follow Thee and say: If it is Thy will, if it is good for me, restore me to health and preserve my life. I know that Thou art an almighty Father, a wise Father, a gracious and loving Father; whither shall the child go in his trouble but to his Father? Lord God the Father in heaven, have compassion on me. Lord God the Son, the Savior of the world, have compassion on me. Lord God the Holy Ghost, have compassion on me. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him; oh, have pity on me also!

If I have been a disobedient child, I am sorry for it; though I have forsaken Thee, still I come back. As the father did not deny help to his prodigal son, so do Thou receive me again into Thy grace; for I come to Thee penitent and believing and say: Have mercy, have mercy on me, O God, my Redeemer. If Thou shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?

Thus trusting in Thee, my Father, I am waiting for Thy help. I have already realized that I can well be a child of God and at the same time be sick, miserable, and burdened with many a cross. Accordingly, Satan shall not easily shake me in my childlike confidence. Only let me soon behold Thy fatherly heart, and know that Thou hast not forgotten me. Let me feel the touch of Thy fatherly hand.

Be still, my soul! The longest night shall end, God's dawn the clouds shall rend, And brighter shine, To perfect day, "Unhasting, yet unresting" — Be still, my soul! Be still, my soul, Thy God is on the throne, His saints strive not alone, Their hour draws near, His kingdom comes, "Unhasting, yet unresting" — Be still, my soul! Amen.

HYMN.

Lamb of God, for sinners slain,
By Thy mercy born again,
For Thy guidance still we pray,
Lest from grace we fall away.

By the mystic cleansing flood,
By the Water and the Blood
Washed and sanctified to Thee,
Holy may we ever be.

Aid us with Thy daily grace
Steadfastly to run our race:
Grant us victory in the strife
And the price of endless life.

Praise to Thee from all on earth,
God, who gavest us new birth;
Praise from all the heavenly host,
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The Sick Person Takes His Stand on the Blessings of the Triune God.

EXHORTATION.

The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. *2 Tim. 4, 18.*

Godly Christians can never lack comfort in their affliction and sickness if they but reflect who they are, and with whom they have to deal. They are God's children; therefore they should believe that the Triune God will not forsake them in their misery and suffering. (1) Their Creator will not forsake them, who has guided

them in their youth, provided for them in the years that followed, and like a father preserved them hitherto. Should God forsake His creatures, the works of His hands? He may hide Himself; but He will not forsake His creature. (2) Neither will their Redeemer, Jesus Christ, forsake them; for He has suffered tortures, anguish, and death for them. Should He who shed His holy blood for them leave them without help in their sickness? O no; He loves them too fervently. (3) Nor will their Sanctifier, the precious Holy Spirit, forsake them. He will comfort, refresh, gladden them, and witness to them that they are the children of God, even though their sickness, suffering, and pains continue.

When a sick person has this threefold comfort in his heart, he will patiently bear his grievous affliction, and firmly believe that his help is not far off. However, (4) he must pray at the same time for the forgiveness of everything that he has done contrary to the Triune God while he was in health. And in such trustful confidence he must patiently and believingly wait for God's gracious help.

PRAYER.

O holy Triune God, though I am now in feeble health, I shall not on that account become weak in my faith and trust in Thee. For they that trust in Thee shall be like Mount Zion: they shall not be moved. As my sickness lingers and grows heavy upon me, my heart is indeed inclined to despondency at times; but I rouse myself again by Thy Holy Spirit, and especially by reviewing Thy past blessings.

Canst Thou forsake me, O my Creator, who hast made me out of nothing and preserved me till this hour? Is the Lord's hand shortened? O no; the hand which has led, guided, strengthened, and sustained me hitherto, will sustain me also in my sickness. Thou hast wooed me with an everlasting love, and hast guided me hitherto by Thy goodness. It is Thy love that has granted me so many days of health.

It is Thy love that has turned away from me misfortune, great sufferings, and dangerous situations. It is Thy love that till this day Thou hast shown me grace, yea, so much grace and mercy. Therefore, I commit myself to Thee also in my sickness. Canst Thou forsake me, my Redeemer, who hast purchased me with Thy holy blood from sin, death, and the devil? Since Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption, Thou wilt grant help also to my poor, sick body. Since Thy love has redeemed me from the curse and death, yea, from hell, it can speedily help me also in my sickness. O Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on me in my present suffering. Canst Thou forsake me, O my Sanctifier, who hast sanctified my body and soul, hast consecrated them in Holy Baptism for a temple to Thee, and hast dwelt in them hitherto? Thou wilt surely remain my Helper, yea, my Comforter, also in my sickness, and wilt give witness now to my spirit that I am a child of God, although I am encompassed with suffering and tribulation.

Therefore, I shall be of good cheer in my pains and suffering, and shall say to my soul: The heavenly Father has embraced thee in His everlasting love; the Son of God has chosen thee for His own, His brother and coheir; the Holy Spirit has assured thee of His sweet consolation and of His gracious indwelling. Therefore all is thine: the grace of God is thine; the merit and righteousness of Christ is thine; the strong consolations of the Holy Spirit are thine; yea, thine is heaven with

all its glory. Since this is so, I will not worry about my sick body, but cast my burden upon the Lord, and trust in God who has shown me so many favors. O my Father, I trust in Thee. O Jesus, I flee to Thee. O Holy Spirit, I commit myself to Thee. Lord God Father, what Thou hast created; Lord God Son, what Thou hast redeemed; Lord God Holy Spirit, what Thou hast sanctified, I commend into Thy hands. Praise, honor, and glory be to Thy holy name now and forevermore!

With Thee, Lord, would I cast my lot; My God, my God, forsake me not, For, Lord, I am commending My soul to thee: Deliver me Now and when life is ending. All honor, praise, and majesty To Father, Son, and Spirit be, Our God, forever glorious. In whose rich grace We'll run our race Till we depart victorious. Amen.

HYMN.

Come, my soul, again inquire
If the love of Christ constrain thee.
To His cross again retire;
See Him give Himself to gain thee.
Search His faithfulness and try Him,
Glad in Him and gladdened by Him.

See Him there, God's only Son,
On the tree for thee suspended,
Crowned with thorns, by grief undone,
Crimson stains with crimson blended,
Pierced for thee, transfixed, forsaken:—
Deathless love by death o'ertaken.

Thou, yea, thou hadst known the rod,
Endless pain thy sole possession;
Thou hadst been cast off by God
For thy multiplied transgression;
But thy Lord thy cause defended;
By His grace thou art befriended.

When in mighty woe He died,
 Vengeance ceased, and wrath abated;
 Sinai was satisfied;
 All things old were new-created;
 Sin and death and hell were thwarted;
 Life and health and heaven imparted.

Jesus, grace sufficient give
 That this mind be ever in me:—
 Thine I am; to Thee would live;
 Naught from Thee shall ever win me.
 Thou wilt not forsake nor leave me;
 Let me, Lord, in love receive Thee.

The Sick Person Resolves to Bear His Sufferings without Murmuring.

EXHORTATION.

I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because Thou didst it.

Ps. 39, 9.

How long wilt Thou forget me, O Lord? Forever? How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me?—thus pious Christians on their sick-beds often sigh in the words of Ps. 13, 1. They often think that God's hour for helping them is delayed too long. When it does not arrive for days, weeks, and months, many do not refrain from murmuring.

A godly person, however, must never permit matters to come to such a pass with himself; he should bear in mind, (1) that God does not forget nor forsake us in our suffering, sickness, and affliction; for that would be contrary to His promise. Though He delay, wait for His help nevertheless; even His delay is for the good of your soul. (2) Even if the cross should grow heavier during the long delay of God's help, no murmuring should arise on that account, but we should remind ourselves of the almighty power, love, and mercy of God. As the medicine is measured to the patient, and the bitter drops that he is to take are numbered, so, we are to believe, all our crosses are weighed and measured to us; for God is faithful, who will not permit us to be tempted above that we are able. Accordingly, (3) if our suffering is severe and

of many kinds, if it lasts a long time, we should not on that account surrender our confidence, but wait for the hour of help with persistent sighing, prayer, faith, hope, and trust.

PRAYER.

O holy and wise God, I now perceive Thy holy counsel and will with respect to me, that I am to spend these days and weeks, and as long as it pleases Thee, confined to my bed and house. Be it so; I do not oppose Thy holy will; I shall not murmur against Thee, but say: Here I am, Lord; do with me as seemeth good to Thee. The cup which my Father hath given, shall I not drink it? My Father will not pour out poison for me instead of medicine. I will bear the Lord's anger; for I have sinned against Him. Even this bitter suffering cannot but prove salutary to my soul, although my flesh and blood abhor it. Thou hast been my Father and my God from my youth; Thou wilt also remain such now that I am sick.

If I am to lie here and suffer a long time, my God, do not draw out my suffering too long, but give me an occasional hour of respite in which I am rid of my pains and my sufferings are alleviated. If I am to suffer much, give me also much strength; for Thou knowest how weak I am, and that I cannot endure much more. Do not lay hold of me too violently, lest I perish. Thou knowest well how much I can endure, and how frail my life is. I am neither of steel nor stone; the wind passes over me, and I sink and die. Do with me as a mother does with her puny child; help me bear my burden; yea, bear it with me, and take me into Thy arms and bosom. If my suffering is to grow still more severe than it is now, do not depart from me with Thy

gracious help and succor. If I am to pass still more sad nights, let me experience Thy comforting, the comforting assurance that Thou art my God, my Father, and my Friend nevertheless.

I know indeed that when Thou sendest affliction to Thy children, it is not Thy intention to destroy them, but to draw them to Thyself. Draw me therefore, my God, by this sickness away from evil habits, from the lusts of the world, to Thee, to holiness, to godliness, to heaven, and to everlasting salvation. Yes, my God, though Thou makest me to suffer thus, I shall not flee from Thee on that account. My Shepherd, though Thou leadest me a path through thorns which wound my body and soul, I follow Thee willingly. Since the Head wore a crown of thorns, the members must not tread on roses. I loved Thee when Thou gavest me health, happiness, and prosperity; therefore, I will love Thee also in sickness, suffering, and pain. I know that Thou canst help me and wilt help me.

God oft gives me days of gladness. Shall I grieve If He give Seasons, too, of sadness? God is good, and tempers ever Every hurt; Me desert Wholly can He never. Amen.

HYMN.

Thy lesson art thou learning,
O tried and weary soul?
His ways art thou discerning
Who works to make thee whole?
In the haven of submission
Art thou satisfied and still?
Art thou clinging to the Father,
'Neath the shadow of His will?
Now, while His arms enfold thee,
Think well, He loveth best,
Be still, and He shall mold thee
For His heritage of rest.

Such silence is communion,
 Such stillness is a shrine;
 The fellowship of suffering
 An ordinance divine
 And the secrets of abiding
 Most fully are declared
 To those who with the Master
 Gethsemane have shared.
 Then trust Him to uphold thee,
 'Mid the shadow and the gloom;
 Be still, and He shall mold thee
 For His presence and His home.

For resurrection stillness
 There is resurrection power;
 And the prayer and praise of trusting
 May glorify each hour;
 And common days are holy
 And years an Eastertide
 For those who with the Risen One
 In risen life abide.
 Then let His true love fold thee,
 Keep silent at His word;
 Be still, and He shall mold thee —
 O rest thee in the Lord

The Sick Person Prepares Himself for Receiving the Lord's Supper.

EXHORTATION.

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. *1 Cor. 11, 28.*

Justly every Christian should so live as to be able to die in peace any moment. Now, if a person in health should so conduct himself, how much more a sick person! Accordingly, a sick person (1) does well when at the first attack of the sickness he thinks of his sins and says: "I do remember my faults this day." For since sickness and suffering come on account of sin, and whoever sins

against his Creator is often punished by sickness, the sick person must be concerned about becoming reconciled with God.

(2) This reconciliation takes place when the sick person with tears and in faith beseeches God to forgive his sins, and penitently receives the Lord's Supper. (3) For we must not imagine that we have to die when we receive the Lord's Supper on our sick-bed; it is not a food unto death, but unto life and salvation. But (4) we are to be reminded that repentance and partaking of the Lord's Supper must not be delayed till we are in the throes of death and our reason and strength are gone, but we should take these steps soon and betimes, while we are still in possession of our faculties, while we are still able to pray and become reconciled with God. If a person thus turns to God with his inmost heart, he will live in Him and obtain grace for Christ's sake.

PRAYER.

Lord, Lord God, merciful, kind, and of great faithfulness, I, a poor sinner, have resolved to seek reconciliation with Thee, and to pray Thee from my heart to forgive the sins which I have committed in my lifetime. I will seek grace and pardon for my sins in the wounds of Jesus, and thus prepare for a peaceful departure from this world. It has pleased Thee, my God, to put me on this sick-bed; but since I do not know whether I shall rise from it again restored to health, or die upon it, I will above all care for my soul and commend everything else to Thee, my kind and merciful God. I will seek to be at peace with Thee while I still have my reason, and can remember when I sinned, how often I sinned, and how grievously I sinned. I will ask Thee to forgive while I am still able to pray; for my sickness may increase, and my reason and the powers of my mind leave me, in which event I should not be able to pray to Thee nor to think of Thee.

I know, indeed, that a person who prepares to die does not on that account die sooner, but he procures for himself the greatest benefit by such preparation, namely, this, that if he is restored to health, he will shun the sins of which he was reminded and which he repented of on his sick-bed; and if he dies, he will have the assurance of dying happy and well prepared. These are my thoughts, my God. In order to obtain, and be assured of, the forgiveness of my sins, I desire to partake of the Holy Supper, and then await patiently, cheerfully, and believingly how Thou wilt deal with me. Accordingly, I prostrate myself before Thee in the anguish of my heart and say: Be merciful to Thy child; do not charge against me the sins of my youth and the follies of my early years. O Lord, for Jesus', my Savior's, sake pardon my iniquity, for it is great. O my God, bless my holy purpose with Thy grace; graciously grant that I may receive the Holy Supper unto the assurance that Thou forgivest me all my sins.

With broken heart, and contrite sigh, A trembling sinner,
Lord, I cry; Thy pard'ning grace is rich and free — O God, be
merciful to me! I smite upon my troubled breast, With deep and
conscious guilt oppressed; Christ and His Cross my only plea —
O God, be merciful to me! Amen.

HYMN.

O Jesus, Bridegroom, Savior, Friend,
With love for me that hath no end,
Who by Thy bitter death hast paid
All debts that to my charge were laid,—
With downcast eyes and many a fear
Thy call has led me to draw near,
Wretched and weak and poor and blind,
In Thee my last resort to find.

O Great Physician, heal this soul;
 Touch every wound; Lord, make me whole;
 Bestow Thy saving grace to-day,
 Wash every stain of sin away.

O Thou blest Master of the feast,
 Accept me as the humblest guest;
 Hungering and thirsting, lo, I come!
 O give me at Thy table room!

What soul and body need supply;
 Remove all that offends Thine eye;
 Dwell in my heart that I may be
 Now and forever close to Thee.

Adorn my conversation, Lord,
 With all the graces of Thy Word,
 And help me throughout all my days
 To keep Thy Law and sing Thy praise.

Then when, O gracious Prince of Life,
 Thou callest from these scenes of strife,
 To Thy blest presence shall I soar,
 And sup with Thee forevermore.

The Sick Person Prays God for the Forgiveness of Sins.

EXHORTATION.

I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. *Job 42, 6.*

It is a fine and laudable custom of true Christians to appear before God every evening and reflect what they have spoken, thought, and done during the day, and to call upon Him for forgiveness of the sins they have committed, and thus to be at peace with God before they lie down to rest. Now, if this is to be done every day, how much more careful should a sick person be not to neglect this practise!

For he should (1) institute an inquiry covering not one day, or one week, or one month, but his entire life. He should ask himself how he has spent his days of health, whether he has em-

ployed them for the glory of God and the good of his fellow-men. He should inquire where, how often, and how grievously he has sinned in his days of health. Since a person has greater leisure on his sick-bed, this inquiry should then be all the more earnest. (2) After such investigation the sick person should call upon God from the heart to forgive him all his sins, especially since he does not know how near or far the moment may be when he shall have to appear before the judgment-seat of God.

(3) If a person on his sick-bed comes to a knowledge of his sins, he should thank God for his sickness by which his eyes were opened, so that he learned to know his misery and was given an opportunity to sue for grace, which might not have been done if he had not been taken sick. (4) However, the sick person must also keep faithfully in his day of health what he has promised during his sickness, lest he bring upon himself a greater evil because he has been faithless in performing what he promised.

PRAYER.

O gracious and loving Father, in Thy name I have resolved to become reconciled to Thee, to pray Thee for grace and the forgiveness of my sins, and then to receive Holy Communion on my sick-bed. I would do this in time, while I still have my full reason. I live, and know not how long; I must die, and know not when. Therefore I come now before Thy throne of grace, and humbly pray Thee to forgive me all sins which I have committed during my whole life.

My God, I must confess that I have provoked Thee to anger in many ways in the past. Alas! I have not always employed my days of health for Thy glory, for attending divine services, for my growth in Christian faith and godliness. Therefore Thou hast reason to visit this sickness upon me, in order that I may examine myself and repent of the misuse of my health and of all my other sins. Forgive me that I have not loved Thee more

fervently, and have not lived a godlier life than I, alas! have done. O Lord, remember not the sins of my youth; according to Thy mercy remember Thou me for Thy goodness' sake. How I tremble when I hear that at Thy judgment-seat I shall have to give account of every idle word that I have spoken! How shall I be able to stand before Thee with the record of my thoughts, since Thou wilt also judge our thoughts? And if I am to give an account of my entire life, of all my works and actions, O Lord, who can stand before Thee?

Therefore I come before Thy throne of grace, trusting wholly in Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. Have mercy upon me for the sake of His wounds; for the sake of the blood which He shed, forgive me all my sins; for the sake of His agony and bloody sweat, help me, O Lord, my God! I am ashamed, my God, to lift up mine eyes to Thee; I am ashamed of my former years and the sins I have committed. Oh, that I had led a godlier and more Christian life! Therefore I vow to Thee, O God, that I will begin a new life. If Thou wilt restore me to health, I will spend the years which Thou mayest permit me to live on earth for Thy glory, in faith and true godliness, and receive them as a present, as an addition to my life. All my life I shall remember this sickness and the anguish of my soul, but also Thy mighty power. O Lord, have mercy on Thy child, and according to Thy great mercy blot out all my sin for Thy goodness' sake!

"Jesus only" is my need; "Jesus only" is my creed; "Jesus only" is my life; "Jesus only" saves from strife. "Jesus only" brings me joy, Blissfulness without alloy; "Jesus only" is my trust, Loving to the uttermost. "Jesus only" would I preach;

"Jesus only" would I teach: "Jesus only" saves from hell: Trust Him, and thou doest well. "Jesus only" from above, Fills my soul with peace and love: "Jesus only" is the way To heaven's joys and endless days. Amen.

HYMN.

Dear Jesus — Savior — hear my prayer:
My weakened soul defend;
As tossed about I come to Thee,
As on my knees I bend.

Thou knowest, Lord, that sin and self
For years have had their sway:
Thou knowest, Lord, I've wandered far
Along the downward way.

In youthful days I had the choice,
My path in life was free;
I loved the world — its sinful joys —
I turned my back on Thee.

But now I find — alas, so late! —
Its charms are brief and frail:
What is the world when sorrows come,
When awful fears assail?

It still would guide by promise fair
In paths that lead to shame;
But, wiser now, I turn to Thee —
I breathe Thy holy name.

And by Thy blood so freely shed —
My wretched soul to save —
I ask for faith to live each day,
For hope beyond the grave.

Teach me to live in love and trust,
In peace — and yet in fear;
For who can tell the dreaded time
When Death himself draws near?

But when he comes, so dark and grim:
I feel his chilling breath,
O Jesus, then stand by my side
To soothe the hour of death!

The Sick Person Prays before Receiving the Lord's Supper.

EXHORTATION.

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? *1 Cor. 10, 16.*

Every true Christian should exercise diligent care to receive the Lord's Supper reverently and worthily. A sick person, in particular, can do this when he examines himself before communing. For (1) he is then free from all those distractions which at public communion with the congregation sometimes disturb devotion. He can continue in his devotion without hindrance, if God keeps him free from pain and the discomforts of his sickness.

(2) Nobody should entertain scruples about receiving private communion, because we know that Jesus has promised to be with His believers by His gracious presence everywhere and always.

(3) At the time of his communion the sick person should also reflect: This may be the last time that I receive the Lord's Supper; and therefore he should with a firmer resolve decide that he will abide in faith and godliness. (4) Godly persons have expressed the wish that their last word might be Jesus, their last food the Lord's Supper, and that their last thought might be of Jesus as He hung bleeding upon the cross. Ought not a sick person, then, rejoice when one of these wishes is to be realized by him? And should he doubt that by the grace of God the other two will also be granted him? (5) But if a sick person were to desire Holy Communion to be administered to him on his sick-bed in order to be restored to health thereby, that would be very wrong and a superstitious notion.

PRAYER.

Dearest Jesus, I desire to receive now, while lying on my sick-bed, the love-feast which Thou hast instituted, since I do not know when I shall depart from this world. However, in order not to appear before the judgment-seat of God without Thee, I desire, while I am still living, to be united afresh with Thee, in order that Thou mayest be

and remain in me and I in Thee. I desire now to receive private communion, and I am certain that Thou wilt gladden and refresh me with Thy grace also in my house.

O dearest Friend of the soul, Thou art nigh to the afflicted; Thou gladdenest them that mourn; Thou art a Helper to them that are oppressed in spirit. Oh, let my heart now be made glad and my soul refreshed by this heavenly food, this heavenly drink. I have, indeed, also received it with the congregation when I was well, but not always, alas! with such reverence and prayerful attention as would have been proper, because I was in many ways distracted by the multitude of people, by vanity, and the lust of my eyes. But now nobody shall disturb my devotion; in my solitude I shall betroth myself to Thee and unite with Thee.

O dearest Jesus, since I am thus about to partake in holy devotion of Thy heavenly feast of joy here on earth, and there is no other hindrance to disturb me, I pray Thee that Thou wouldst subdue my pains in this sickness, and give me relief during this hour, that I may carry out my purpose without hindrance and disturbance. I now show forth Thy death, and remind myself of Thy suffering and dying, Thy wounds and pains, Thy agony and anguish, Thy death on the cross, and all that Thou hast done for me. I think of these things, and thank Thee for them, and say: Oh, for all that wrought our pardon, for Thy sorrows deep and sore, for Thine anguish in the garden, I will thank Thee evermore; thank Thee for Thy groans and sighing, for Thy bleeding and Thy dying, for that last most bitter cry, and shall praise Thee, Lord, on high.

I also remind myself of the institution of Thy Holy Supper, in which Thou givest me food and drink unto eternal life. I believe Thy words, and accept them as the words of an all-knowing, almighty, and truthful God. I believe that in Holy Communion I receive Thy true body and Thy true blood in this manner: when I receive the bread which has been blessed, I receive in an invisible manner Thy true body, O Jesus; and when I receive the cup that has been blessed, I receive in an invisible manner Thy true blood. This heavenly food, now, and this heavenly drink shall strengthen in me the faith that I am reconciled to God. This heavenly food and drink shall comfort me with the assurance that I am not lost, but have eternal life. This heavenly food and drink shall certify to me that I stand in Thy grace, that I have the forgiveness of sins, and am united with Thee, who art the propitiation for our sins, yea, for the sins of the whole world. This heavenly food and drink shall remind me of the heavenly banquet of joy, namely, of the joy and glory everlasting, to which Thou wilt conduct me after my death.

O Jesus, Thou Bridegroom of my soul, sanctify and cleanse me that as Thy bride I may plight and betroth myself to Thee forever. O Shepherd of my soul, lead Thy sheep in green pastures; feed me with the bread of life; refresh me with Thy holy blood. Then Satan cannot harm me; sin cannot raise charges against me nor condemn me. Here I have a perfect ransom for my sins, which Thou hast paid for me on the cross, and by which I am justified and saved.

Ah, how hungers all my spirit For the love I do not merit!
 Oft have I, with sighs fast thronging, Thought upon this food with
 longing, In the battle well-nigh worsted, For this cup of life have
 thirsted, For the Friend who here invites us, And to God Himself
 unites us. Amen.

HYMN.

O Jesus, bruised and wounded more
 Than bursted grape or bread of wheat,
 The Life of life within our souls,
 The Cup of our salvation sweet!

We come to show Thy dying hour,
 Thy streaming vein, Thy broken flesh;
 And still the blood is warm to save,
 And still the fragrant wounds are fresh.

O Heart that with a double tide
 Of blood and water maketh pure;
 O Flesh once offered on the cross,
 The gift that makes our pardon sure, —

Let nevermore our sinful souls
 The anguish of Thy cross renew,
 Nor forge again the cruel nails
 That pierced Thy victim body through.

Come, Bread of heav'n, to feed our souls,
 And with Thee, Jesus enter in!
 Come, Wine of God, and as we drink,
 His precious blood wash out our sin!

The Sick Person Prays after Receiving the Lord's Supper.

EXHORTATION.

I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which
 I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who
 loved me, and gave Himself for me. *Gal. 2, 20.*

A true Christian always has reason for heartfelt gratitude to
 God when he has received the Lord's Supper; how much more
 should a sick person thank God from his inmost heart when he

has been able to receive the Lord's Supper in sound mind! However, in this connection we are to be reminded, (1) that we must not imagine that a turn for the better must occur after the sick person has communed. A turn for the better has, indeed, taken place if the patient received the Sacrament worthily; for he has obtained the forgiveness of sins and peace with God; he has entered into intimate communion with Jesus. But the Lord's Supper was not instituted for bringing about a change in a person's sickness; we have no promise to that effect.

(2) Accordingly, no sick person should receive Communion to see whether he will get well or die; for that is a misuse of the Sacrament. But he should use it to strengthen his faith, and to assure himself of the forgiveness of his sins, of the grace of God, and the salvation of his soul. When he has thus received it after the order in which Christ has instituted it, he should (3) praise God for it, and with a quiet heart and a believing soul commit himself to God. In war, when people have put away their most valuable goods, they are content. Our soul is our greatest treasure; when in sincere repentance and union with Jesus Christ we have commended this into the hands of God, we are assured that God will deal kindly also with the body.

PRAYER.

My Jesus, I have heartily desired to receive Holy Communion before I die. This desire has now been fulfilled and stilled: Thou hast fed me with Thy holy body and given me Thy holy blood to drink. For this I praise Thee from my inmost heart. I am lying here on my sick-bed, from which I may rise again by Thy almighty power, but on which I may also die if such is Thy holy will. Therefore I have prepared myself. My soul is now restored, after I have been united with Jesus. Yes, I will gladly die now that I have entered into the most intimate communion with Thee, O Jesus. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant de-

part in peace; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.

O Jesus, live in me; give me a calm mind, Christian contentment, and a soul that is completely resigned to Thee. Grant me grace constantly to have holy and pious thoughts, and let the lovely and sweet remembrance of Thee be ever alive in my heart. If it is Thy will, O God, to summon me out of this life by death, let Thy will be done. I know that my sin has been forgiven me; therefore I need not be afraid to come before Thee. For where there is forgiveness, there is also life and salvation. I know that Jesus has given me His righteousness; when I appear before Thee, O God, in this beauty and glorious dress, Thou wilt on its account pronounce me free from guilt and exempt from the Judgment. Now that I am justified by faith, I have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Heaven and the access to the throne of grace have been opened for me. I know that Jesus is my Advocate with God. I die in the grace of God, in peace with God, I am assured of the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Thus I am saved; I die saved; I depart saved from this world, and shall be saved in eternity.

This is a great favor which Thou hast bestowed on my soul, O God, that in a sound mind I have been able to keep this heavenly feast of love with Jesus. May this heavenly food strengthen and keep me in true faith unto life everlasting! Thus, then, my wish, too, has been fulfilled that the Lord's Supper might be my last food before I die. Grant me also that the last word which I shall speak in this world may be Jesus, and my last thoughts may be

directed to the blood, death, suffering, and dying of Jesus, and to His holy merit. Then I know that I shall live and die happy and blessed. If God be for us, who can be against us? Yea, who will separate us from the love of Christ? I will not let Him go till He brings me to the assembly of the saints and the elect.

O bliss! in Jesus' name I've tendered My prayer; He pleads at Thy right hand for me. Yea and Amen in Him is rendered What I in faith and spirit ask of Thee. O joy for me! And praise be ever Thine, Whose wondrous love has made such blessings mine! Amen.

HYMN.

The Lord is my Shepherd, no want shall I know,
He leadeth me gently where green pastures grow;
Beside the still waters, He giveth me rest,
By the light of His presence my pathway is blessed.

He restoreth my soul as He walks by my side;
In the path of the righteous my feet He doth guide
For His honor and glory that my life may prove
The depths of the Father's unchangeable love.

Through the valley of death my pathway may lie;
Though sorrow's dark clouds hide the light of the sky,
No evil I'll fear through affliction's dark day;
His rod and His staff are my comfort alway.

He spreadeth my table, rich bounties are there;
Though foes may surround me, I'm the child of His care.
My head He anointeth, my cup runneth o'er;
All blessings He gives from His bountiful store.

His goodness and mercy, each day of my life,
Shall follow and guard me from evil and strife
In service below and in glory above—
Forever I'll dwell in the house of His love.

The Sick Person Prays when Taking Medicine.

EXHORTATION.

Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. *Jas. 5, 14, 15.*

Devout prayer is always necessary in days of health: why should a sick person forget to pray, especially when taking medicine? As regards medicine and its use, a sick person (1) should not despise physicians and medicines, and should not think: If I am to become well again, God can restore my health without medicine; and if I am to die, medicine will not help me. No; we are not to think thus; for that would be tempting God. God has not promised to help us without means. What God has not promised us we cannot ask of Him. Those who despise medicine and die thus are murderers of their own body.

(2) However, we must not put our trust in physicians and medicines, but in God. Thus among the sins of King Asa this, too, is charged against him, that in his sickness he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians, and had greater confidence in them than in God, 2 Chron. 16, 12. Therefore, (3) a sick person should choose the mean between the two: he should pray with his lips and heart, and in firm confidence in God's help he should take his medicine and thus use it. In this way he knows that it will be blessed to him.

PRAYER.

O great God, Thou seest the condition in which I am; for nothing is hidden from Thine all-seeing eyes. Thou seest into the most secluded nooks; Thou lookest also upon my sick-bed and knowest how I feel this moment. O my God, I will use the medicine prescribed for me in Thy name; but my only hope is in Thee; for Thou art the Lord that healeth us. Nevertheless, since Thou lettest herbs grow out of the earth and hast Thyself created medicaments which are to serve for our health, I will now take such medicine, praying and calling upon

Thy holy name from my heart: Oh, do Thou put Thy blessing into it!

I know, indeed, that Thou art able without medicine to help and make me well again; for if Thou speak the word only, the sick person is restored to health, and at a mere word from Thee the sickness must yield. Nevertheless, since Thou hast commanded us to use these means also, I will use them in obedience to Thy direction; and I pray Thee, O great God, bless the medicine which, firmly trusting in Thee, I now take in Thy name. Let it be blessed to me for the restoration of my strength and the recovery of my health, for the alleviation of my pains, and for a refreshing in my feeble condition. If Thou pronounceest Thy blessing upon it, even the smallest herb can help me; aye, herbs and plasters help and heal when Thy blessing goes with them. I do not take this medicine to compel my health to return, but as a means which Thou hast permitted me to employ for the purpose of recovering my health at Thy hand. I lift up mine eyes to heaven when I take up my medicine; I sigh unto Thee before using it, while using it, and after using it. If Thou wilt let it take effect in me, I shall recover; for my days are in Thy hands. Nothing can and may prosper without Thy blessing; therefore, O Dispenser of blessings, I cry to Thee for Thy blessing. What Thou, Lord, blessest is blessed forever. If Thou wilt help me by means of medicine, I shall indeed return heartfelt thanks to Thee for the medicine, but I shall also bear in mind that it was not herbs and plasters, but Thy mercy that preserved, and Thy hand that healeth me, and with Hezekiah I will spread Thy praise among all men.

Dear Refuge of my weary soul, On Thee, when sorrows rise,
On Thee, when waves of trouble roll, My fainting hope relies. To
Thee I tell each rising grief, For Thou alone canst heal; Thy
Word can bring a sweet relief For every pain I feel. Amen.

HYMN.

In weariness and pain,
By sins and fears oppressed,
I turn me to my Rest again,
My soul's eternal Rest.

The Lamb that died for me,
And still my load doth bear;
To Jesus' streaming wounds I flee,
And find my quiet there.

Jesus, was ever grief,
Was ever love like Thine?
Thy sorrow, Lord, is my relief,
Thy life hath ransomed mine.

O may I rise with Thee,
And soar to things above,
And spend a blest eternity
In praise of dying love.

A Sick Person Prays for Alleviation of His Pains.

EXHORTATION.

Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged; and though I forbear, what am I eased? *Job 16, 6.*

Sickness and bodily ailments which God sends men are not all of one kind, as we learn from experience. To some God sends a sickness which causes them no pain in any member, no, not in their little finger; upon others He visits cruel pains. This should remind us, (1) that, if we can pray, learn to know God, and wish to be reconciled with Him, we must do this betimes, and not wait until we become sick, as Sirach says: Do not delay your repentance till you are ill. For in such severe pains how are we to pray, think

of God, seek reconciliation with Him? Our great pains will not let us do so.

But when a sick person is seized with pain, he should (2) not murmur against God on that account, but accept whatever comes calmly and patiently. Still (3) he may ask to have his condition eased; as Christ, too, did in His suffering. Children tell their troubles to their parents, why should not a child of God do the same to his Father?

However, when in great pain, he should (4) remember the great sins which he has committed during his lifetime, and should acknowledge that these sufferings are well merited, but remember also God's great mercy and great power, which can deliver him from his pains. (5) If he is not able to pray much and long because of his pains, let him sigh to God, and know that such sighings of the heart do not go unheard. (6) Impatience, however, does not lessen our pains, but increases them.

PRAYER.

Lord, hear my prayer; give ear to my supplication, my King and my God; for unto Thee will I pray. Oh, I will pray and beseech Thee graciously to look upon me in my bodily weakness, and to lessen my pains and my great suffering. Thou hast certainly promised that Thou wilt not let us be tempted above that we are able, but wilt with the temptation also make a way of escape that we may be able to bear it. Oh, behold, my God, the burden is well-nigh growing too heavy for me. My pains are becoming intolerable, my body is faint, my strength is much reduced, my tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth, my bones are consumed as with fire, my eyes fail me, because I must wait such a long time for my God. Oh, how long, how long shall my soul be in anguish and long for Thee! Delay not, my God; Thou seest my sore need.

Thou knowest that many have been the anxious days and nights which I have passed. Thou hast

heard my moans and sighs, my complaints and cries. Whither shall I turn in my misery and my pains? Oh, whither shall I go? Whither do I know to go? Whither can I go except to Thee alone, the Lord, my God? If I were to tell my troubles to all men, they might have compassion upon me, but would not deliver me. Therefore, I come to Thee; I know that Thou canst help me; it lies with Thee to do so; speak the word only, and I shall live. O dearest Jesus, Thou didst command the raging sea to be calm: oh, oh, command also my pains to abate. Thou didst heal the palsied man with a word: magnify Thy mercy in me also. Refresh me again, after I have suffered so long and endured so much. Oh, come to me with Thy help, before my pains consume me altogether. And if according to Thy counsel I am to suffer pain still longer, let me nevertheless be pastured as Thy sheep in Thy mercy, in order that I may believingly and patiently wait for the favor of my Father, which will quiet my pains. Oh, lay Thy gracious hand upon me, and I shall be made whole and free from pain.

Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord; let Thine ear be attentive to the voice of my supplication. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning; for I know that with the Lord there is help. Help me, O God of my salvation, for Thy name's sake; deliver me, and forgive me my sins for Thy goodness' sake. However, not as I will, but as Thou wilt. If I am to endure pain still longer, let Thy will be done. Only give me strength to bear it. Grant me an occasional day, or at least an hour, of rest, my

God, that I may be refreshed and strengthened.
Our affliction is light and but for a moment; therefore, do Thou make my pains less severe, and finally deliver me from them.

Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer to Thee! E'en though it be a cross That raiseth me; Still all my song shall be, Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer to Thee! Amen.

HYMN.

When in the hour of utmost need
We know not where to look for aid;
When days and nights of anxious thought
Nor help nor counsel yet have brought,—

Then this our comfort is alone
That we may meet before Thy throne,
And cry, O faithful God, to Thee
For rescue from our misery;

To Thee may raise our hearts and eyes,
Repenting sore with bitter sighs,
And seek Thy pardon for our sin,
And respite from our griefs within.

For Thou hast promised graciously
To hear all those who cry to Thee,
Through Him whose name alone is great,
Our Savior and our Advocate.

And thus we come, O God, to-day,
And all our woes before Thee lay;
For tried, afflicted, lo! we stand,
Perils and foes on every hand.

Ah! hide not for our sins Thy face,
Absolve us through Thy boundless grace,
Be with us in our anguish still,
Free us at last from every ill,—

That so with all our hearts we may
Once more our glad thanksgiving pay,
And walk obedient to Thy Word,
And now and ever praise Thee, Lord.

The Sick Person Sighs to God Not to Forsake Him.

EXHORTATION.

Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands. *Is. 49, 14—16.*

As great joy is caused to a poor person when he finds a rich benefactor, or to one forsaken when he obtains strong aid, so a sick person can have much cheer in his sickness and suffering because he has the promise that God will not forsake him. He should bear in mind, however, (1) that delaying help does not mean forsaking a person. Many sick persons cry and say that God has forsaken them when He does not help them immediately, not as speedily as they had calculated. But we are not to think thus. Though a while it be delayed, He denieth not His aid; though it come not off with speed, it will surely come at need.

The sick person (2) should reflect that God has appointed the hour when He will help him, and he is to wait patiently until that hour arrives. (3) He should reflect whether in days of health he has not forsaken God, and whether he has reason to feel surprised if God now makes him conscious of his unfaithfulness. But it is of this that God would remind the sick person by delaying His help. Therefore, let the sick person (4) persist in saying believingly: God cannot forsake me; I am His child; God will not forsake me, for He has promised me not to do so. God will not forsake me, for He has often helped in times past. If the sick person will thus take courage in God, he will patiently bear the delay of the divine help and will ultimately obtain the glorious proof that he had not been forsaken by God.

PRAYER.

O dearest God and Father, who hast loved me with an everlasting love, and drawn me with loving-kindness, behold, I, a poor sufferer, come to Thee and humbly pray Thee that Thou wouldst not forsake me in my bodily infirmity. Thou knowest, my God, that without Thee there is no help for me.

Thou art the mighty God of Jacob, the Defender of Israel, the Refuge of the afflicted, the Helper of sufferers, and their Succor in times of need. The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. He will arise and have mercy upon Zion; He will in mercy look upon me. Men say: We cannot help you, and thus I am indeed forsaken by all men. But I know that I am not forsaken by Thee; for God forsakes no one that trusts in Him. He is faithful to those who put their firm confidence in Him. He may lead me strange ways, but I shall not become terrified; for with rejoicing I shall behold His wonderful counsel in the end.

O my God, do not forsake me; behold how long my suffering has lasted! In the evening I think it will be better in the morning, and at noon I long for the evening to come. Yea, during the night I often cry, Watchman, what of the night? My soul waiteth for Thee more than they that watch for the morning. O my God, do not forsake me; behold how my suffering is becoming ever more grievous. Do not let this burden crush me; remove the stone that oppresses me, the rod that is coming down upon me, the pains that afflict me. Thou knowest my feeble strength, and how much I am able to endure. My God, do not forsake me; behold how my sufferings are multiplied; my sorrows do not seem to grow less, but to increase. Whither shall I go if Thou art forsaking me? If Thou wilt not help me, no creature can help me. If Thou art forsaking me, I shall be left without help.

But I know that Thou dost not forsake me. I appeal to Thy promise; for Thou hast said: "I will not leave thee nor forsake thee." They that

trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth forever. The Strength of Israel has promised to give strength unto His people, and to deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper. I trust in Thy Word, and my hope is this, that Thou wilt establish Thy faithfulness in the very heavens. Thou canst not forsake me; for I am Thy child. Am I not Thy purchased possession, bought with Thy precious blood? I am Thine own; therefore Thou wilt not and canst not forsake Thine own child. I am confident that Thou wilt not forsake me; Thou hast never yet forsaken me in my afflictions and tribulations, though sufferings without number took hold upon me, and the waves of sorrow closed over my head; hence Thou wilt not forsake me this time. In this thought I rest content; in this I trust and am of good cheer, saying: Lord, I will not let Thee go except Thou help me in such a manner as may be pleasing to Thee.

Bow down Thy gracious ear to me, And hear my prayers,
Lord, speedily, O grant me Thy protection; For woes and fear
Surround me here, Help me in my affliction. My God and Shield,
now let Thy power Be unto me a mighty tower, Whence bravely
I defend me Against the foes That round me close. O Lord,
assistance lend me! Amen.

HYMN.

Master, bid me rest awhile;
I have journeyed many a mile
O'er a rough and hilly way;
May I rest awhile to-day?

Long I've known 'tis good for me
Patiently to follow Thee;
Pardon me when I forget
That my way by Thee is set.

Thornier paths by Thee were trod,
O Thou sinless Son of God;
Ought I, then, cast down my load
While I tread an easier road?

Lord, Thy gracious voice I hear:
"Weary child, be this thy cheer,
Thou art ever in My sight,
Even in the darkest night.

"Mine thy burden! Bear it on
Till thy time of rest shall dawn;
Light as morning's lightest beam
Shall My yoke of service seem."

Rise, my soul! Whate'er thy lot,
Stand therein, and fear it not;
Ever go where Jesus leads:
He provides for all thy needs.

The Sick Person Contemplates His Death.

EXHORTATION.

I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing. *2 Tim. 4, 6—8.*

Reflecting upon our death is (1) a useful occupation; for by so doing we withdraw our hearts from vanity and sins; we regard all that is earthly as things which we cannot take with us to heaven, which we cannot keep, and from which we can derive no comfort in the hour of death. To remind ourselves of our death is (2) also a necessary matter; for those who imagine that death is still far away from them often become bold, wanton, and vicious; they plunge into worldliness and become conformed to the world. Now if such persons are suddenly overtaken by death, they are certainly lost. Reflecting upon our death is (3) very salutary; for the person who dies before he dies, that is, who diligently considers his end, does not die when he dies. For him death has no terrors;

for the death of believers is nothing but a sweet slumber and a going to their Father. And who is afraid of going to his Father or of going to bed?

However, (4) we are not to think that it is a sign of death when a sick person talks much about dying, arranges for his funeral, makes his testament, and keeps himself in readiness for dying in peace. Not at all; no one dies a moment sooner on that account than God has determined that he shall. (5) Nor should we picture our dying hour to us as something cruel and terrible, as some sick people do who are afraid to die and to think of their heart stopping. The heathen indeed have said that of all terrible things death is the most terrible; but Christians die in the grace of God, in the arms of Jesus, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. What is terrible in that? Is not this rather a comfort, a pleasure and joy?

PRAYER.

It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life—thus I sigh unto Thee, my God, because in my great weakness which is ever increasing I perceive plainly that the end of my life is at hand. I desire to be unclothed and to be with Christ. I am not afraid of death and dying; I have often thought of it while I was well, therefore it does not seem terrible to me now. As Noah's dove was glad to return to the ark, as a stranger hastens with longing to his fatherland, so I regard my death as my being received into rest out of unrest, as a happy arrival after my pilgrimage in the heavenly land of joy, where my heartfelt longing will be stilled in the heavenly embrace of my Jesus.

I know that the death of believers is a sweet slumber and a passage into the life everlasting. Wicked men and children of the world may be afraid of death; for they have no gracious God, they are not in communion with Jesus Christ, and have not yielded their heart to God the Holy Spirit

for a dwelling. But I am not afraid to die, because I am assured of all these facts. The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? God is my Father; Jesus is my Guide and Comforter; I am going to Him, I shall be with Him; why should I be afraid? The Bridegroom of my soul will welcome me, His bride. When my Jesus spoke of His impending death, He said: I go to the Father. Yes, dearest Jesus, I shall repeat these words after Thee: When I die, I go to the Father, to heaven, to joy, to eternal life. Why should I be afraid to die? Jesus is mine; His righteousness is mine; His merit is mine; heaven is mine; why should I not be glad? My body returns to the earth, but my soul ascends to God; it passes from this world into heaven, from vanity into bliss, from mourning to rejoicing, from suffering to happiness, from weeping into glory. Is not this a blessed transition? I go to rest, to joy, to gladness, to light, to everlasting pleasures. Do I not see the angels even now standing about my bed to conduct my soul to yonder glory? Do I not see Jesus extending His arms to receive me, His child? And many thousands of saints ready to welcome me?

Therefore I am without fear; I forget those things which are behind, earth and all things earthly that I possess here, and reach forth unto those things which are before, the heavenly treasure that is reserved for me on high. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me

only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.
How pleased shall I be when I am unclothed! What
happiness shall be mine when I am in the arms of
Jesus! What delight shall seize me when I have
passed through death into the life eternal!

Death can never kill us even, But relief From all grief To
us then is given. It doth close life's mournful story, Makes a way
That we may Pass to heavenly glory. Amen.

HYMN.

When clouds above between the sun
And earth outspread their colors dun,
And curtain all my light,
Thy face, O Lord, lift Thou on me,
Till all the noisome shadows flee;
And then Thy glory I shall see,
Enraptured with the sight.

When foes shall beat against my heart,
And hurtles there each flying dart
My faith to overthrow,
Encircle me, O Lord, with might,
Till these retreat in quickened flight,
Like gloom when sunbeam rays benight
The heavens with their glow.

When trial's hammer, great and stark,
Descends on me, a quivering mark
For every thundering blow
That pounds upon the smithy's block,
May I, O Lord, receive the shock,
Believing that each sturdy knock
Will make my graces show.

When disappointments round me crowd,
And when my head in grief is bowed,
Like grasses 'neath the gale,
Still may I trust, have no despair,
Cast off my fears and every care,
And plume my soul with fervent prayer
Through joyous heights to sail.

Yea, Lord, let come e'en blighting death
 To pinch my heart and seize my breath,
 And lay me in the grave;
 Within the monster's face I'll fling
 The challenge, "Death, where is thy sting?"
 While near me shining angels sing,
 And victory's banner wave.

The Sick Person Contemplates His Grave and Resurrection.

EXHORTATION.

Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection and the Life. **He** that believeth in **Me**, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in **Me** shall never die. *John 11, 25. 26.*

No matter how dark the grave may look, a person viewing it as a Christian will not be terrified at it. For (1) it is a chamber of rest, where we are relieved of all misery, grief, and heartache. However, while the believer's body will sleep and rest free from pain, his soul (2) will enjoy heavenly and endless joy; for the souls of the righteous are in God's hand; no sorrow can touch them; consolations, joy, and gladness ever encompass them. Nor (3) shall the body remain in the grave; when the bones and weary members have rested, they will rise again in glory on the Last Day, shine like the sun, and be reunited with the soul.

(4) If any one should raise this objection: Must I not, however, leave my dear ones and my earthly possessions? he should be reminded that in heaven there will be a general reunion. If our dear ones will remain faithful and God-fearing, they will follow us, never to be separated from us. As to our earthly possessions, God will give us, instead, heavenly and eternal treasures. If a sick person ponders all these facts, the contemplation of the grave cannot seem terrible to him.

PRAYER.

Gracious and merciful God, behold, I am ready in accordance with Thy holy will either to live or die. I am not afraid to die, because I know that death will bring me rest after so many trials and

afflictions. For departing from this life I leave all my sufferings, tribulations, crosses, and unrest behind me. I enter into rest and joy; I shall be delighted, refreshed, gladdened after I have spent gloomy hours and sorrowful nights in this world. Nor am I afraid of the grave; for, behold, it will be my chamber of rest. My misery, sickness, and suffering do not go into the grave with me, but must remain behind. O quiet retreat, O pleasant place of repose! when shall my weary members and my feeble body be enfolded by thee?

Jesus has hallowed the grave for me. When He was laid in the grave after He had endured all His suffering, His pains and sorrows ceased. And so the Lord has prepared also for my body a chamber of rest in the earth, and for the soul a place of refreshing in heaven. Men seek beautiful houses and soft beds for their rest; but these cannot be compared with my grave. We may be driven from a beautiful house by fire, war, or other calamities; but in my grave no one will disturb me. Jesus will guard my bones that not one of them shall be lost; yea, He will gather them again, out of the world. Many a person must suffer pains and discomforts even in a soft bed; but no evil shall come nigh me and no pain shall touch me in my grave. Thus the grave is a bed free from all suffering and pain; as soon as a person is laid in it, his pains and discomforts cease.

Why should I be afraid of the grave when I am not to remain in it? I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He will raise me up from the dust at the latter day. My Jesus says: "He that be-

lieveth in Me hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day. Hence my grave is to be a place where I shall tarry but a short time, where my body shall sleep till Jesus comes and says: Arise, ye dead, and appear before the Judge! The hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear His voice and come forth. When I shall hear that voice, I, too, shall come forth from my grave. My body will be reunited with my soul, made immortal and glorified, and I shall shine as the sun. All the weakness that was in me and around me shall then have disappeared. A grain of wheat that seemed dead when buried in the ground begins to sprout again: thus my bones will be gathered, be furnished with sinews and arteries, and clothed with skin. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body, endowed with heavenly properties. What now sickens, mourns, and sighs, Christ with Him in glory bringeth; Earthly is the seed, and dies; Heavenly from the grave it springeth.

Since Thou from death didst rise again, In death Thou wilt not leave me; Lord, Thy ascension soothes my pain, No fear of death shall grieve me; For Thou wilt have me where Thou art, And so with joy I can depart To be with Thee forever. And so I stretch mine arms to Thee, and gladly hence betake me; Peaceful and calm my sleep shall be, No human voice can wake me, But Christ is with me through the strife, And He will bear me into life, And open heav'n before me. Amen.

HYMN.

No other way, no other name;
My heart is kindled to a flame,
As thus with steadfast faith I see
No other way or name for me.

Loud voices cry, Lo, here; Lo, there;
Wise men are seeking everywhere
New lights that gleam o'er hill and plain,
And tremble far across the main,
Revealing doctrines strange and new,
To draw us from the tried and true.
Still springs my thought, exultant, free,
No other way, or name for me.

"I am the Way, the Truth, the Life,"
Sounds clear through all surrounding strife,
And sitting at His blessed feet,
This Teacher, in Himself complete,
No mist can overcast the soul;
His love doth clarify the whole.

No wayfarer need err therein,
This path of life revealed by Him;
And so in storm or calm I see
No other way or name for me.

My soul no other stair can climb,
To where eternal glories shine
Than faith in the dear blood once shed
To bring my nature perfected,
O'er the long path of joy or pain,
To the soul's native home again.

Christ conquered death, and so we bring
Our Easter blossoms while we sing
His triumph o'er the cruel grave,
His power our blessed dead to save.

The darksome night fades far away
As breaks the morn of that glad day;
For some time He will come once more
With those we loved and lost of yore.
So all the bells of earth may chime
To usher in the joyous time,
And all the flowers of earth may bloom,
In wealth of beauty, o'er the tomb;
So through all clouds of pain I see
None other way or name for me.

The Believing Christian Thanks God for His Restored Health.

EXHORTATION.

Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. *John 5, 14.*

It is a fact that many sick persons make profuse promises to God with their lips that they will become new creatures, pious Christians, fervent in prayer, diligent in church attendance, and altogether different men in heart, manners, and conduct, if God will let them get well. But, alas! daily experience shows that many, after they have recovered their health, do not keep these promises, but become as vain, vicious, unruly, misbehaved, and defiant as they were before, if they do not become even worse.

Therefore, when a true Christian has been raised from his sick-bed, he should (1) recognize the almighty power of God, and praise and glorify the power of God which first cast him on his sick-bed, and then raised him up again and graciously delivered him from the peril of death. (2) A sick person that has been restored to health should pay the vow which he made on the bed on which he might have died, and should keep his promise, because he made it to God, and not to men. For it is better not to promise than not to keep a promise. (3) If, like Hezekiah, he has gained new strength, he should return thanks to the almighty Helper and Deliverer, and praise and glorify God also before other men, thus giving them an opportunity to recognize the grace of God which has been manifested towards him. (4) He should also remember the anguish of his soul, diligently reflect upon the mortal danger from which he has escaped, and lead a pious and godly life to the glory of the almighty Triune God. Yea, he should continue in faith and in a godly conduct, so as to be ready henceforth to die in peace and quit this life gladly, if God should call him hence.

PRAYER.

O almighty and gracious God, I now appear before Thy most holy face, and thank Thee from my inmost soul, because Thou hast raised me up from my sick-bed. I still remember the anxious hours, the grievous suffering, the sorrowful nights, the

great danger that hovered over me. But behold, Thy mighty hand has graciously lifted me from my couch; Thou hast placed me on my feet again, that I may go out and in. Thy mercy has turned my mourning into dancing. Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness. Lord, Lord, Thou hast done great things for me, whereof I am glad. Thy love and mercy has helped me hitherto. For this I know for a truth, that he who serves Thee will be comforted after his affliction, delivered from his trials, and will find grace after the chastening. For Thou, O God, takest no pleasure in our destruction. After the tempest Thou makest the sun to shine again, and after our wailing and weeping overwhelmest us with joy. I, too, have experienced this mercy and faithfulness of my Father in my sickness; therefore as long as I live I will remember the anguish of my soul.

But I will also extol in the presence of the great congregation what Thou, O almighty God, hast done for me. Thou hast blessed my medicine; Thou hast soothed my pain; Thou hast given me strength to overcome my affliction, after nights of toil and suffering Thou hast granted me days of refreshing, and hast had pity on me in my sorrow like a father. Therefore, bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord; the humble and other sick persons shall hear of it, and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, all ye, who like me have ever been in trouble, sickness, and affliction, and let us exalt His

name together. For when we poor ones cried, the Lord heard us, and saved us out of all troubles. They who in faith look unto the Lord in their affliction and call upon Him in prayer, their face shall not be ashamed. He does not let them go away sorrowful from His throne, but has compassion on them according to His mercy.

O my God, let the grace and mercy which Thou hast manifested towards me be ever before my eyes and in my heart. Now I know and have made proof of it, that Thou art an almighty God: Thou canst quicken the dead, restore the sick to health, make the weak strong, and gladden the sorrowful. I was nigh unto death, but Thy goodness has preserved my life this time. Therefore, my God, I am firmly resolved by Thy grace to employ the health which Thou hast granted me, the life which Thou hast renewed to me, and the years which by Thy counsel I am still to spend in this world, for Thy glory and in true godliness. Oh, in my pains and sickness I have learned that silver and gold, worldly honor and glory, even good friends, could not take from me the burden of my cross; but for Thy help I should have had to perish in my affliction. Therefore, I will henceforth seek after vain things no longer, but find my delight in Thee. I will shun the sinful society of the world; I will compass Thine altar, O Lord, that I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all Thy wondrous works. Having had this special mercy revealed to me, I will deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world, in order that like the wise virgins I may be ready,

when Thou comest to me with the summons of death and my life shall end, to enter in at the marriage of the Lamb in everlasting joy and glory.

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah, Pilgrim through this barren land; I am weak, but Thou art mighty, Hold me with Thy pow'rful hand: Bread of heaven, Feed me till I want no more. Open now the crystal fountain Whence the healing streams do flow, Let the fiery, cloudy pillar Lead me all my journey through: Strong Deliverer, Be Thou still my Strength and Shield! When I tread the verge of Jordan, Bid my anxious fears subside; Death of death, and hell's Destruction, Land me safe on Canaan's side; Songs of praises I will ever give to Thee. Amen.

HYMN.

How can I thank Thee, Lord,
For all Thy loving-kindness?
Thou hast so long a time
Had patience with my blindness,
When dead in many sins
And trespasses I lay,
And kindled, holy God,
Thine anger every day.

Lord, Thou hast shown to me
Divine commiseration:
I persevered in sin,
But Thou in great compassion;
I did resist Thee, Lord,
Deferring to repent;
Thou didst defer Thy wrath
And instant punishment.

It is Thy work alone
That now I am converted,
Thy power o'er Satan's work
In me Thou hast asserted;
Thy mercy, that doth reach
Unto the clouds, O Lord,
Did break my stony heart
By Thine own mighty Word.

Though able to offend
Thee, Lord, by sin and failing,
Still to regain Thy grace
My strength was unavailing.
Though I could fall from grace
And choose the way of sin,
I had no strength to rise,
A new life to begin.

But Thou hast raised me up,
And with divine compassion
Hast shown me, Lord, the way
That leadeth to salvation.
I thank Thee, Lord, that now
My former sins I hate,
And freely — not from fear —
Dead works abominate.

That I may not backslide,
But life in heav'n inherit,
Grant me, while here I live,
O Lord, Thy Holy Spirit
That He may give me strength
In mine infirmity,
And e'er renew my heart
To serve Thee willingly.

O guide and lead me, Lord,
While here below I wander;
Grant that I follow Thee,
My Guide and my Commander.
For if I lead myself,
I soon am led astray;
But if Thou ledest me,
I do my duty aye.

O Father, God of love,
Hear now my supplication!
Lord Jesus, Son of God,
O grant me Thy salvation!
And Thou, O Holy Ghost,
Always abide with me
That I may serve Thee here
And there eternally!

Scripture Passages and Short Prayers for Those to Ponder Who Were Sick and have been Restored to Health.

O Lord, my God, I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me.

Ps. 30, 2.

Blessed be the Lord, who hath shown to me His marvelous loving-kindness. Thy vows are upon me, O God; I will renew praises unto Thee. For Thou hast delivered my soul from death, my feet from falling, that I may come before Thee in the light of the living.

I cried to God in my distress, His mercy heard me calling; My Savior saw my helplessness, And kept my feet from falling; For this, Lord, praise and thanks to Thee! Praise God most high, praise God with me! To God all praise and glory!

I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant. *Gen. 32, 10.*

O yes, my God! It is nothing but mercy and love on Thy part that Thou hast delivered me from my pains and troubles. I am altogether unworthy of all such benefits. Thy faithfulness has been truly glorified in me when Thou didst deal with me in loving-kindness, as Thou didst promise. Let this never pass out of my mind. Let me always be roused by this remembrance to show love and faithfulness to Thee as long as I live, in order that I may as Thy servant render Thee acceptable service, and finally as a good and faithful servant receive Thy cheering welcome: Enter thou into the joy of Thy Lord!

You ask me how I know That when all life below Is past for me, I, often stained by sin, Shall meet heaven's welcome in To purity? I answer, Not because I keep God's holy laws. Alas!

I fail. No righteousness of mine Before that court divine ('an then avail. But One did say, "Believe On Me, and thus receive My gift of life." How can I trust my Lord, Or honor His dear Word, If doubts are rife? 'Tis not that I am good; That must be understood; But I believe, And, therefore, not to know That I to Him shall go Would my Lord grieve. It is not I who save, Nor any worth I have; Do you not see? But I can be quite sure I shall reach heav'n so pure, Because 'tis He.

He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living. *Job 33, 28—30.*

Lord Jesus, Thou hast proved Thyself to me a true Redeemer and Deliverer, because Thou hast not only kept my soul, but also preserved my body when there was but a step, yea, a hair's breadth between death and me. Deliver me still from spiritual and bodily destruction. Deliver me from the hand of all my enemies. Deliver me especially from the dominion of sin. Grant me grace that I may become a light in the Lord and walk as a child of light. Let me serve Thee without fear in holiness and righteousness before Thee all the days of my life. Give me strength to keep my faith and preserve a good conscience to the end. The rest of my time in the flesh let me live, not in the lusts of men, but to Thy will, that I may thus remain Thine forever.

As thy day thy strength shall be: As thou needest hour by hour, Comes the promise unto thee What thou needest — nothing more. "Take no thought," the Master says, "What shall greet the morrow's sun; Leave with Me thy yesterdays This is thine — this day alone. "Lies it through the sunny meads, Rosy-hedged and velvet-lined; Joy sufficient for thy needs Every gladsome step shall find." Is it of all beauty shorn, He will heavenly beauty lend;

If thou falter, weary, worn, He is there, thy Savior, Friend. Well He knows thy every loss — Who hath none from hill to shore? He will help thee bear thy cross, He hath borne one long before. “Come,” He pleads, “and every care I will lift from off thy breast; Come, ye burdened, nothing spare; Come, and I will give you rest.” “Come!” And, wherefore, dearest Lord, Should I turn away from Thee, Thee, who holdest in Thy hand Strength that shall sufficient be, Strength to toil and strength to wait, Strength to suffer and be strong; Strength to reach yon pearly gate, Where all tears are turned to song?

This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God.

John 11, 4.

I have realized, my Savior, that in me has been done what once upon a time Thou didst say concerning Thy sick friend Lazarus. My past sickness was not unto death; for in a manner quite glorious Thou hast delivered me from it. To Thee alone belongs the glory. Let my recovery also redound to Thy glory. Give me a new heart and a new mind. Let me proclaim everywhere the great things Thou hast done for me. Give me strength to live to Thy glory alone, and to praise Thee without ceasing with my body and with my spirit.

Thus all my pilgrim way along I'll sing aloud Thy praises, That men may hear the grateful song My voice unwearied raises; Be joyful in the Lord, my heart! Both soul and body, bear your part! To God all praise and glory!

Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. *John 5, 14.*

O Lord Jesus, let me always bear in mind this warning. One well-deserved punishment for my sins Thou hast taken from me by delivering me from the sickness through which I have passed. Something worse than that can easily happen to me

if I again consent to sin and act contrary to God's commandment. From this preserve me graciously. Guard me that henceforth I may no more sin purposely, but walk before Thee and remain godly. O unite my heart to fear Thy name.

Grant honor, truth, prosperity, And love thy Word to ponder ;
False doctrines, Lord, keep far from me, And grant both here and
yonder What serves my everlasting bliss ; Preserve me from un-
righteousness In all my life and doings.

A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance ; but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken. All the days of the afflicted are evil ; but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast. Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith. *Prov. 15, 13. 15—17.*

My God, Thou hast taught me the truth of this by my late sickness. There I have learned what a vain thing property and money, prosperity and good fortune are, and how useless they are when we are deprived of health. Yea, I have learned that this valuable gift cannot be purchased with all that we possess. Thanks be unto Thee for this wholesome lesson ! Now enable me also to heed it. Keep me from becoming enamored of earthly things and from prizing them more highly than I should. Enable me to esteem health very highly as a precious gift, to guard it with all diligence, and to avoid everything by which I might forfeit it.

O God, Thou faithful God, Thou Fount that ever flowest,
Without whom nothing is, Who all good gifts bestowest, A pure
and healthy frame, O give me, and within A conscience free from
blame, A soul unhurt by sin. And if a longer life Be here on
earth decreed me, And Thou through many a strife To age at last
wilt lead me, Thy patience in me shed, Avert all sin and shame,
And crown my hoary head With pure, untarnished fame.

I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep Thy righteous judgments. *Ps. 119, 106.*

Oftentimes during my past sickness I have thought of amending my life. Oftentimes, too, I have vowed to Thee, O God, to do so. I now renew my promise. Remind me of it often, lest I forget to pay Thee my vows. Give me the strength of Thy Spirit to fulfil them. Make me through Him a person who henceforth walks in Thy ways, keeps Thy commandments, and does according to them. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me in all my ways. Let me to the end live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, in order that I may thus realize that godliness is profitable unto all things and has the promise of this life and of that which is to come.

My God, accept my heart this day, And make it always Thine, That I from Thee no more may stray, No more from Thee decline. Before the cross of Him who died, Behold, I prostrate fall; Let every sin be crucified, Let Christ be all in all! Anoint me with Thy heavenly grace, Adopt me for Thine own; That I may see Thy glorious face, And worship at Thy throne. May the dear blood, once shed for me, My blest atonement prove, That I from first to last may be The purchase of Thy love. Let every thought and work and word To Thee be ever giv'n; Then life shall be Thy service, Lord, And death the gate of heav'n!

Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace. *Ps. 37, 37.*

Dear Father, let this faithful call of Thine ever resound in my heart and ring in my ears; also make me able to follow it faithfully. Make me truly godly. Teach me to do Thy will; for Thou art my God. Thy Spirit is good; lead me in the land of uprightness. Grant me strength in even greater measure to fol-

low after holiness, and to do Thy will. Enable me to grow and increase in faith, in love, in godliness from day to day, and bless me with prosperity while I live here.

Thou Treasure inexhaustible, Thou Source of true delight, What care I for the world's applause Or for its diamonds bright? More prized by far one smile from Thee Than all earth holds most dear; I want for nothing man can give, For I have Jesus here. Yes, yes, this Lov'd One is my own; Could any richer be, When all He has and all He is — All, all, belong to me? In Him is bread that can sustain, And living wine to cheer; And there's a heart that beats for me, For I have Jesus here. 'Tis sweet to linger by His side, To listen to His voice, For, oh! He speaks in melting tones, Which make my heart rejoice. And when His name, His own dear name, Resounds upon my ear, I can but weep for very joy, For I have Jesus here. And often now I love to sit, And watch for His return, For though in spirit He is here, I still His absence mourn; But soon shall dawn that brightest day, Soon, soon, He shall appear. And, oh! I must be with Him then, For I have Jesus here.

Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty; for He maketh sore, and bindeth up; He woundeth, and His hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. *Job 5, 17—19.*

How true is Thy Word, O my God; for I have fared exactly as it is written here: Thou didst make me sore, and bind me up; Thou didst wound me, and make me whole. Thou hast delivered me from many and various troubles. Blessed be Thy holy name! Perhaps some new trouble awaits me; Thou alone knowest. If it should come, grant that I may be truly prepared and ready for it, and let me firmly rely on Thy Word when it comes. Let me recall how often Thou hast gloriously helped me. Let me look to Thee in childlike confidence and hope, and

wait until Thou wilt help me again. Let me taste and see, even beneath Thy chastening rod, Thy good purposes concerning me, and that all things work together for good to them that love Thee.

If sorrow comes, He sent it, In Him I put my trust; I never shall repent it, For He is true and just, And endeth every ill; My life and soul I render, To God, my strong Defender, Let Him do as He will. Whate'er shall be His pleasure Is surely best for me; He gave His dearest Treasure, That our weak hearts may see How good His will is toward us; And in His Son He gave us Whate'er could bless and save us; Praise Him who loveth thus!

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Rom. 6, 11.*

My God, Thou hast spared my life and given it anew to me. Hence it belongs to Thee alone. Put me always in mind that I must consecrate it to Thee alone. Let me daily die unto sin and live unto righteousness. Let me live to Thy glory, and order all that I do or forbear doing according to Thy will. Let me always find favor in Thy sight through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Renew me by Thy grace from day to day, and make me to be a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto Thee. Keep me in Thy fellowship to the end that no one may pluck me out of Thy hand.

I need a dying Savior, Whose efficacious blood My soul within can cleanse from sin, And bring me peace with God. I need a living Savior, Who sees my daily need; For me to stand at God's right hand, And for my soul to plead. I need a patient Savior, Whose love can still forget The many days I've left His ways, When sin has me beset. I need a faithful Savior, Sometimes to use the scourge To keep my eyes upon the prize, And on my feet to urge. I need a human Savior, Who knows what sorrow means, To wipe my tears in all life's years, And temper all its scenes. I need a mighty Savior, The very Lord of heav'n, To hold me fast until the last, Whom grace has first forgiv'n.

BOOK IV.

For the Use of the Dying and Those Attending Them.

The Dying Person Places Himself before the Judgment-Seat of God.

EXHORTATION.

We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. *2 Cor. 5, 10.*

“If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged,” that is St. Paul’s admonition in 1 Cor. 11, 31. Indeed, if a person of his own accord examines his life, charges himself with his wrongdoings, and prays for mercy for Christ’s sake, God will not judge and condemn him, but be gracious to him. For whoever confesses his iniquities and quits them shall obtain mercy.

Now, a dying person, too, should do this: he should reflect, (1) that he will have to appear before Christ’s judgment-seat; for it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment. Now, this takes place immediately after death, when the soul must at once appear before God. If a person, while he was in the world, has been a believer and led a godly life, he does not enter into judgment, but since his sins were forgiven him on earth for the sake of the blood of Jesus Christ, they are no longer remembered in heaven, but remain forgiven. A wicked person, however, must appear before the divine judgment-seat because he died without being reconciled to God. A dying person, therefore, (2) does well if he seeks reconciliation betimes, asks God’s forgiveness for the sake of the blood of Jesus, and in this way obtains mercy. Thus he is assured that, no matter when and where he dies, by a sudden or by a slow death, God will graciously receive his soul, and he will on the Last Day enter into joy everlasting, having been justified by the blood of Jesus.

PRAYER.

I know, O my God, that it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment; therefore I place myself now before Thy judgment-seat while I am living, and wish to be reconciled with Thee before I die. O righteous God, since I do not know how long it will be till I depart from this world, behold, I come before Thy judgment and accuse myself. Oh, I acknowledge that I am a great sinner. I have transgressed all Thy holy commandments, and that, frequently and knowingly. I have not loved Thee with all my heart, with all my soul, and all my strength. I have not always followed in the footsteps of my Jesus, nor have I always let the Holy Spirit lead me, as I should have done. I remember that I was made Thy child in Holy Baptism, but that I have not always lived as a child of God; that I have often made many promises to Thee at confession and communion, but have kept few and have again become conformed to the world. O Lord, I have not done right; yea, the load of my sins is weighing me down; I have not walked the way which Thou hadst appointed me. Mine iniquities are gone over my head; as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.

O gracious God, Thou hast promised that Thou hast no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Behold, I come now, desiring to make my peace with Thee, while I am still in my sound mind and can recall my past life. Oh, I repent of my sins; I prostrate myself before Thy tribunal, and say: Lord God, Father in heaven, have mercy upon me;

Lord God Son, the Savior of the world, have mercy upon me; Lord God Holy Ghost, have mercy upon me. O Father, I take refuge in Thy mercy and say: I have sinned in Thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called Thy child, yet, I pray Thee, be merciful to Thy child, and do not cast me away on account of my transgressions. I flee to Thee, O Jesus, my Advocate: oh, intercede now for me, poor sinner, in the hour of my death. For if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. Oh, pardon my iniquities for the sake of Thy blood, and let me find mercy at the bar of strict justice because of Thy holy wounds. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness; according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. O blessed Holy Spirit, I flee to Thee: oh, create in me a clean heart; bear witness to me that I am a child of God, have been received into favor with God. Yea, work in me a sincere repentance, a living faith, and a holy resolve to live only to Thy glory and to die in child-like obedience to Thee.

Oh, work in me holy thoughts, devout supplications, sweet meditations on death. Grant me a refreshing contemplation of heaven and the future glory. Let my heart hear the comforting words: My son, be of good cheer: thy sins are forgiven thee. Then I shall not be afraid to die, because I know that the sins which have been forgiven here are forgiven also in heaven. O Holy Trinity, have mercy

upon me; let me find grace with Thee at my departure from this world, and do not charge against me anything that I have ever done amiss, but have compassion on me according to Thy love.

That day of wrath, that dreadful day, When heav'n and earth shall pass away! What power shall be the sinner's stay? How shall he meet that dreadful day? When, shriveling like a parchèd scroll, The flaming heavens together roll; When louder yet, and yet more dread, Swells the high trump that wakes the dead: Lord, on that day, that wrathful day, When man to Judgment wakes from clay, Be Thou the trembling sinner's stay, Though heaven and earth shall pass away. Amen.

HYMN.

The day is surely drawing near
When God's Son, the Anointed,
Shall with great majesty appear
As Judge of all appointed;
All mirth and laughter then shall cease,
When flames on flames will still increase,
As the Apostle teacheth.

A trumpet loud shall then resound,
And all the earth be shaken;
Then all who in their graves are found
Shall from their sleep awaken;
But all that live shall in that hour,
By the Almighty's boundless power,
Be changed at His commanding.

A book is opened then to all,
A record truly telling
What each hath done, both great and small,
When he on earth was dwelling;
And every heart be clearly seen,
And all be known as they have been,
In thoughts and words and actions.

Then woe to those who scorned the Lord,
And sought but carnal pleasures,
Who here despised His precious Word,
And loved their earthly treasures!
With shame and trembling they will stand,
And at the Judge's stern command
To Satan be delivered.

O Jesus, who my debt didst pay,
And for my sin wast smitten,
Within the book of life, O may
My name be also written!
I will not doubt; I trust in Thee,
From Satan Thou hast made me free
And from all condemnation.

Therefore my Intercessor be,
And for Thy bloody merit
Declare my name from judgment free,
With all who life inherit,
That I may see Thee face to face,
With all Thy saints in that blest place
Which Thou for us hast purchased.

O Jesus Christ, do not delay,
But hasten our salvation!
We often tremble on our way
In fear and tribulation.
Then hear us when we cry to Thee;
Come, mighty Judge, and make us free
From every evil. Amen!

The Dying Person Forgives and Asks to be Forgiven.

EXHORTATION.

If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. *Matt. 6, 14. 15.*

It is part of a true preparation for dying in peace to be reconciled with our fellow-men. A dying person should not delay this reconciliation a long time, but attend to it in time while he is still in his perfect mind.

However, the dying person should (1) bear in mind that if other men have done many things to spite him, he must not take any grudge against his enemies and offenders with him into the grave, but must heartily forgive them and, if possible, show them by kindnesses or through good friends that he has forgiven them. However, if (2) he has caused other men grief and offended them, he should not rest until he is reconciled with them; yea, he should not be ashamed to ask them to come to his dying-bed and ask their forgiveness with heart, lips, and hand; or if they are absent, he must ask their forgiveness in writing; or if they are dead, he must implore forgiveness from God for the wrong he has done them.

At the same time he should also restore to his fellow-men or their heirs whatever he has stolen, or filched, or wrongfully taken from them, because sin cannot be forgiven if a person is unwilling to restore the things he has filched and stolen, or their equivalent. (3) The dying person should feel impelled to seek such reconciliation, not only by his duty as a Christian, but also by the divine command and threat in *Matt. 6, 15.* and should remember that if he is unwilling to forgive, neither will he ever obtain mercy from God. As you deal with your enemy, so God will deal with you.

PRAYER.

My God, I live, and know not how long; I must die, and know not when. Therefore, I will seek reconciliation with my fellow-man in time, that I may depart from this world with peace in my heart. Heaven is called the home of peace: no souls that are irreconcilable, revengeful, and filled with wrath

and hatred shall be admitted into it, but driven back. Therefore, I will purge my heart from all anger and animosity: I will gladly forgive and ask to be forgiven, in order that God for 'Jesus' sake may graciously receive me as a person who wished to be reconciled. Oh, I am still on the way to eternity, therefore I shall lay aside all enmity in the certain confidence that as I forgive from the heart Thou wilt also pardon me.

Therefore, I herewith forgive from my inmost heart all my enemies, all who have opposed me, and all who have offended me by words, deeds, or gestures. I pardon and forgive them not only with my lips, but also with my heart in the presence of God. I will nevermore remember what they have done to me: I will forget it, and to assure them that I am reconciled to them, I will wish them everything good, and do them good wherever and whenever I am able. Yea, I ask God to bless them and let it be well with them and their children in time and eternity.

And as I now from my heart pardon and have forgiven all who have ever angered, or in any way harmed or grieved me, so I also ask forgiveness herewith of all those whom I have ever offended, or in any way injured or grieved. O my dear friends, forgive me all for the love of Jesus: do not bear me a grudge. I acknowledge that I have wronged you; I ask your forgiveness with my heart, mouth, and hand. Would to God I could see you all here at my death-bed: I would ask you personally to forgive me.

Yea, graciously forgive me, O Thou merciful

God, all the grief which I have caused my fellow-man while I lived, no matter who he is, whether I have done it from malice or weakness, intentionally or unintentionally. Oh, forgive me for Thy mercy's sake. I herewith cast out of my heart all enmity. I will not avenge myself, and not think of any wrong that I have suffered. Oh, remember not my sins and iniquities. O my heavenly Father, have mercy upon me. O my Jesus, wash me clean from sins and intercede for me. O Holy Ghost, sanctify my heart and cleanse it from all unrighteousness. Thus I die cheerfully and in peace.

O grant that from my very heart My foes be all forgiven,
Forgive my sins and heal their smart, And grant new life from
heaven; Thy Word, that blessed food, bestow, Which best the soul
can nourish; Make it flourish Through all the storms of woe That
else my faith might overthrow. Amen.

HYMN.

I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus,
Trusting only Thee;
Trusting Thee for full salvation.
Great and free.

I am trusting Thee for pardon,
At Thy feet I bow;
For Thy grace and tender mercy,
Trusting now.

I am trusting Thee for cleansing
In the crimson flood;
Trusting Thee to make me holy
By Thy blood.

I am trusting Thee to guide me;
Thou alone shalt lead,
Every day and hour supplying
All my need.

I am trusting Thee for power,
Thine can never fail;
Words which Thou Thyself shalt give me
Must prevail.

I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus,
Never let me fall;
I am trusting Thee forever
And for all.

The Dying Person Bids His Dear Ones Farewell and Gives Them His Blessing.

EXHORTATION.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. *Acts 20, 32.*

It is an occurrence well known in Holy Scriptures that persons when about to die bid farewell to their dear ones and friends, and that they give their children, if they have any, their blessing. In the case of Moses, Isaac, Jacob, Jesus Christ, and others this is clearly seen.

Now, this blessing (1) is not vain; for since it is a farewell prayer which the dying person offers for his dear ones, it will not remain unanswered, if offered from faith and in the name of Christ.

(2) As a rule, therefore, survivors have not been unimpressed by the last words of a dying person. Accordingly, the admonition of a dying father, a departing mother, or a friend is not soon forgotten, but remains fastened in the mind as a spur to proper conduct.

While it is laudable that a dying person bids farewell to the world with prayers, blessings, and good wishes, he should (3) be careful not to wish evil to any one, because this would be a form of revenge which is not becoming to a Christian. (4) Children should be admonished not to grieve, and cause heartache to, their parents in days of their health, and thus make it impossible for their parents to leave them their blessing. The parents' curse has often changed the children's fortune into misfortune. However, godly, Christian parents give even to their bad children a blessing rather than a curse.

PRAYER.

O eternal, kind, and great God, I do not know how near my end may be, and when Thou wilt issue Thy command and summon me out of the world. Therefore, I wish to prepare for my death in time, and especially turn to Thee with prayer and singing, because this is the best means to delight and strengthen me in my weakness. Whene'er in grief I pray and sing, I feel new courage in me spring; Thy Spirit witnesses that this Is foretaste of th' eternal bliss.

I shall now prepare myself for the life to come, and attend to all those things that I still have to attend to in this life. Therefore, I bid farewell to all my relatives, acquaintances, benefactors, and friends. O great God, I commend them to Thy protection, love, and grace. For all the love and favors which they have shown me do them good in return, and since I cannot repay them, do Thou henceforth recompense them richly for me. I leave my friends, relatives, and acquaintances; but do not Thou, O great God, forsake them. Keep them in Thy fear, in faith, and in godliness, in order that we may see each other again in the life everlasting.

I go the way of all flesh; I go before, but in heaven all the believers and children of God shall meet again. O faithful God, shower Thy abundant blessing on those whom I leave behind me, who will be in sadness and pain over my departure from this world. The Lord bless you, my loved and dear ones; may He bless you in body and soul; may He henceforth be your Father, Provider, and Sustainer; may He take you into His protection; may His fatherly mercy procure for you a sufficiency of all that you

need, and preserve you from all evil. Fear God and do right at all times; put your trust in Him, and be assured that He will have compassion on you and be gracious to you. Do not turn from Him by unbelief, wickedness, and unchristian conduct, but be faithful to Him unto death, and He will give you the crown of life. Do not forsake God, and He will not forsake you. Honor Him, serve Him, love Him, and obey Him. Yea, the God of all grace and mercy bless your going out and your coming in, that you may be and remain the blessed of the Lord.

O great God, I have blessed them, let them be blessed. And now I lay myself in Thy arms, O Triune God; take my soul, and receive it into everlasting joy. I desire to depart and to be with Christ. Lord Jesus, unto Thee I live, unto Thee I die; living and dying I am Thine.

Jesus, I live to Thee, The loveliest and best; My life in Thee, Thy life in me, In Thy blest love I rest. Jesus, I die to Thee Whenever death shall come; To die in Thee is life to me In my eternal home. Whether to live or die, I know not which is best; To live in Thee is bliss to me, To die is endless rest. Living or dying, Lord, I ask but to be Thine; My life in Thee, Thy life in me, Make heav'n forever mine. Amen.

HYMN.

God be with you till we meet again,
By His counsels guide, uphold you,
With His sheep securely fold you;
God be with you till we meet again.

Chorus.

Till we meet at Jesus' feet;
God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again,
'Neath His wings protecting hide you,
Daily manna still divide you;
God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again,
 With the oil of joy anoint you,
 Sacred ministries appoint you;
 God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again,
 When life's perils thick confound you,
 Put His arms unfailing round you;
 God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again,
 Of His promises remind you,
 For life's upper garner bind you;
 God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again,
 Sickneses and sorrows taking,
 Never leaving nor forsaking;
 God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again,
 Keep love's banner floating o'er you,
 Smite death's threat'ning wave before you;
 God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again,
 Ended when for you earth's story,
 Israel's chariot sweep to glory;
 God be with you till we meet again.

The Dying Person Commends Himself to God.

EXHORTATION.

Into Thine hand I commit my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me,
 O Lord God of truth. *Ps. 31, 5.*

Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit. *Luke 23, 46.*

Oftentimes dying persons have many things to order and arrange before their death. They want to set their house in order, and, while doing so, forget what is most valuable, their souls. But to act thus is very unwise and wrong. Every sincere Christian should rather (1) commend his soul as well as his body every day

on retiring at night or rising in the morning to the protection of God, and that justly, because he does not know what God will decree concerning him during the day or the night.

(2) But if godly Christians are doing this daily, dying persons, too, should do this. They have before them the example of their Savior. When He was about to die, He said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." Stephen did the same; while being stoned, he sighed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Such care for the soul is pleasing to God; for by it a person manifests his faith and trust in God. However, (3) this is also highly necessary. We witness many changes and accidents in dying persons. How well is it, then, to commend the soul to God while a person is still in his sound mind, and thus to put away his best treasure in safe-keeping, while, as regards all other things, he resigns himself to God's will for life or death. When all things have been put in order thus, a person dies in peace.

PRAYER.

Merciful and loving God, who turnest men to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of men; who takest Thy beloved ones to Thyself through death and makest them partakers of the glory which Jesus has purchased for us by His bitter suffering and death: I see that my weakness is becoming a voice calling aloud to me: "Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die"; "Prepare to meet the Bridegroom; keep the lamp of your faith ever burning."

Now, since I do not know when my hour will be at hand, I will yield myself to Thee in time and commend my soul with all its powers to Thee. Let my heart be emptied of all worldly affairs; drive out from it all worldly, sinful, and wicked thoughts, that I may speak of Thee, picture to myself Thy glory, and unceasingly contemplate the joy of the elect which awaits me also. Fill my heart with

Thy Holy Spirit, that He may create good impulses in me. Help me to remember Jesus Christ, and always to keep before my eyes the blood which He shed, and His death.

When my last hour is at hand, preserve me, if such is Thy holy will, from temptations, from thoughts that weigh heavy on the soul, from great pains, and unbecoming demeanor. Let me keep my sound mind till the end, until I expire, in order that my heart, lips, and spirit may sing, speak, and pray of Thee. And if I should lose my speech, make me to enjoy Thy sweetness in my heart and to feel Thy most holy presence.

Give me by Thy grace cheerfulness to die; let me in my dying moment have a glimpse of the pleasures of the blessed, and let me taste a few drops of heaven's sweetness, that I may go hence full of joy and consolation. When my soul quits the body, I commend it to Thee; oh, receive it into Thy hands! Father, into Thy hands I commend my soul. Yes, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Cover it with Thy perfect righteousness, and conduct it to the joy of heaven like a bride to the joy of the marriage-feast, like a child to its inheritance, until it shall be reunited with the body on the Last Day. Yea, I also commit to Thee my body in the cool earth: grant it undisturbed rest, until the last trumpet shall sound the call: "Arise, ye dead, and appear before the judgment-seat." And then let me gladly and happily arise unto life for Jesus' sake.

When, at Thy summons, I must leave This world of sin and sadness, Grant me Thy grace, Lord, not to grieve, But to depart with gladness; My spirit I commend to Thee, O Lord, a blessed end give me Through Jesus Christ, — yea, Amen.

HYMN.

O lead me to the Rock! Though rudely beat
 The surges o'er life's rough and restless sea,
 Still will I trust and prayerfully entreat,
 That kept from every harm,
 Held by the divine arm,
 Peacefully let me rest, O Christ, in Thee.

Aye, lead me to the Rock, firm and secure,
 Let it my refuge be when sorrows fall;
 When overwhelmed with grief, let me feel sure
 That Christ, my dearest Friend,
 Will strengthen, help, defend,
 And grant His smile to cheer me when I call.

O lead me to the Rock, there let me rest,
 Confidingly, in darkness or in light,
 When heart is faint, upon the Savior's breast;
 There let me calmly lie
 Without distrust or sigh,
 Until with rapture faith is lost in sight.

The Dying Person Engages in a Contemplation of Heaven.

EXHORTATION.

But Stephen, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.

Acts 7, 55. 56.

Nothing can be sweeter or more pleasant to the soul of a believer than to think of God and heaven. In heaven is his home, his fatherland, his consolation, his heritage, his crown, his glory, his desire, his joy. His body is on earth, his soul with God; his labor is on earth, his thoughts are in heaven.

If that is the state of a believer, what should a dying person do? A dying person experiences many sad things: the gathering darkness, the farewell from his dear ones, the tears of

the bystanders, the last agony, and the like. However, all this can be sweetened for him if he fixes his heart beyond the skies, whither he himself would go. (1) Over against the earth that is growing dim around him he should place the glory of heaven, where all shall be bathed in light. (2) During the painful leave-taking he should think of the cherubim and seraphim, the holy angels and the elect in heaven, in whose company he will be forever. (3) When he sees his dear ones weeping, he should remind himself of the everlasting joy, gladness, and bliss which awaits him in the life eternal, where there shall be no more sighing, no more sorrows and tears.

Yea, (4) his agony should cause him no fright, because he dies in the arms of Jesus and in the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. To the person who is thus occupied with thoughts of heaven, and pictures to himself the crown, the white robe, the glory of heaven, to him the dying-bed becomes a paradise.

PRAYER.

O gracious God, how great is Thy love and mercy toward us mortals! Not only dost Thou good unto us, sending us help, hearing our prayers, having mercy upon us, and overwhelming us with many blessings during our life, but Thou hast, moreover, reserved for us many and glorious treasures in heaven. For in heaven, O God, what great gifts shall be ours!

By faith, therefore, I picture to myself even now Thy great majesty and glory, the splendor in which Thou dwellest, the many thousands of seraphim, all the angels and the elect, that is, all godly persons who have ever lived on earth, standing around Thy throne, praising and magnifying Thee, and shouting Holy, holy, holy, to the glory of Thy name. Yea, I picture to myself that it will not be long any more till I shall be among them, after I have fallen asleep calmly and peacefully. I put myself in mind of the

glorious crown that I shall wear on my head, and the white robe with which I shall be clothed, yea, that I myself shall shine like the sun.

O the glory, O the bliss, O the gladness, which the Father of all grace and mercy will bestow on me for Jesus' sake! Therefore I am not frightened by death, because it will open the door for me to all this glory. If an earthly king can garnish his palace with so much glory that men are amazed and do not become weary admiring it, how great and glorious will be the magnificence of the heavenly King and the splendor of the infinite God! Therefore I will gladly die and quit this earth. I behold heaven with joy; for there is my eternal dwelling-place.

Here I have no continuing city anyway. That home Jesus, my Savior, has purchased for me by His suffering and death; I shall enter it by faith in Him. When I look heavenward, I am reminded that there is my fatherland, where all godly Christians and believers are assembled. While I am in the world, I am a pilgrim and a stranger who is journeying continuously, but when I am arrived in heaven through a happy death, I enter into rest, peace, and eternal happiness. I look up to heaven with joy and say to myself: There is my heritage. If I have a great heritage here on earth, in heaven there is laid up for me an inheritance undefiled and that fadeth not away. I reflect that heaven is the paradise where God will delight the believers, and that in comparison with it the paradise on earth is a mere shadow. My God, when I shall behold Thy glory in heaven, I shall say to Thee, as the Queen of Sheba said to Solomon: O my God, O my Jesus, the

half of Thy glory was not told me in my earthly life.
Thy glory and Thy prosperity exceedeth the fame
that I heard.

O could we make our doubts remove, Those gloomy doubts
that rise, And view the Canaan that we love, With unbecclouded
eyes: Could we but climb where Moses stood, And view the land-
scape o'er, Not Jordan's stream nor death's cold flood Should fright
us from the shore. Amen.

HYMN.

The Homeland! O the Homeland!
The land of souls free born!
No gloomy night is known there,
But aye the fadeless morn.
I'm sighing for that Country,
My heart is aching here;
There is no pain in the Homeland,
To which I'm drawing near.

My Lord is in the Homeland,
With angels bright and fair;
No sinful thing nor evil
Can ever enter there.
The music of the ransomed
Is ringing in my ears,
And when I think of the Homeland,
My eyes are wet with tears.

For loved ones in the Homeland
Are waiting me to come
Where neither death nor sorrow
Invade their holy home.
O dear, dear native Country!
O rest and peace above!
Christ bring us all to the Homeland
Of His eternal love.

The Dying Person Meditates upon the Promises of God.

EXHORTATION.

Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. *Matt. 25, 34.*

Dying persons need relief and refreshing for the soul as well as for the body. But what can refresh the soul? Not gold and silver, not honor and earthly splendor, but the Word of God, of which David says: "Thy Word is the rejoicing of my heart." For this reason we should, while we are well, gather and store in our heart beautiful passages of comfort, that we may have an abundant supply in the agony of death.

A dying person, however, should especially (1) remind himself, or have himself reminded, of the divine promises which we find in the Holy Scriptures regarding God's help, assistance, presence, and grace. (2) He should, moreover, appropriate these comforting passages and promises, as if God had spoken them to him, and was giving these promises to him personally. For in the Holy Scriptures God speaks to all in general and to each person individually.

Having these promises before him, he should (3) put his trust in them, and not doubt that God will fulfil them in him. If God does not do so this very minute or in an hour, if He delays the fulfilment, He will nevertheless gloriously redeem His promises in His own time.

PRAYER.

O God, plenteous in mercy, how sweet are the promises which Thou hast made me in Thy Word, saying: "I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him"; again: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God"; and again, when my Jesus says: "Where I am, there shall also My servant be. In My Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." Yea, what a sweet consolation when I am assured that Jesus

intercedes for me and is my Advocate, and that the Holy Spirit maketh intercession for me with groanings which cannot be uttered!

O gracious God, fulfil all these promises in me now! My distress is continually becoming greater; be with me, and abide with me in my last agony. Let me enter the glory and occupy the place which Thou hast prepared for me. O Jesus, be now my Advocate; plead for me poor sinner, that I may obtain grace and mercy. O blessed Holy Spirit, assist me in my weakness, and give me power and strength! If a severe struggle is before me, help me to conquer and to overcome. If I have to climb a steep mountain, give me strength. If there is a critical hour before me, help me to pass through it. When my lips can no longer pray, make intercession for me before God with groanings which cannot be uttered; yea, carry my feeble sighs up to God.

O Thou God, plenteous in grace, I cling to Thy promises, and believe that Thou wilt fulfil them in me, poor wretched one, according to Thy mercy. I believe Thy Word; I trust in Thy Word. When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. Thy Word has always been the consolation and joy of my life; let it be my relish and refreshing now in the hour of death. When the time comes that for peace I have great bitterness, do Thou in love to my soul deliver me from the pit of corruption. Refresh me when the sweat of death begins; cheer me when my lips grow pallid; comfort me when hearing and sight fail me. O Triune God, let me then hear in my heart joy and gladness, the voice of jubilation and rejoicing, as a prelude and foretaste of heavenly glory.

O Thou mighty God, now hearken To the prayer Thy child hath made; Jesus, while the night-hours darken, Be Thou still my hope, my aid; Holy Ghost, on Thee I call, Friend and Comforter of all, Hear my earnest prayer, O hear me! Lord, Thou hearest, Thou art near me. Amen.

HYMN.

Quiet in God! How beautiful to be
Settled and calm and rested, Lord, in Thee;
Amid earth's fret and jar and empty noise,
Its fleeting pleasures and tumultuous joys,—
Quiet in God.

Quiet in God! How calm, how sweet, how deep,
When He who loves gives His beloved sleep;
Quiet when, in the hush of early morn,
The soul on wings of prayer to heaven is borne,—
Quiet in God.

Quiet in God, in sickness or in health,
In days of poverty or days of wealth,
In days when all around is bright and glad,
In days when dark clouds lower and all is sad,—
Quiet in God.

Quiet in God, in Him whose name is Love,
Whose sweet peace broodeth like a heavenly dove
O'er all the heart, and gives such perfect rest
That whatsoe'er He sends is good and blest,—
Quiet in God.

Quiet in God, when life looks long and bright,
Or when the end seems near, though hid from sight;
Quiet, because His sweet peace reigns within
Whose blood so precious cleanseth from all sin,—
Quiet in God.

Quiet in God! Whate'er of earthly bliss
I am denied, dear Lord, deny not this,
That calm, sweet peace that Jesus gives His own
Who cast their care on Him and Him alone,—
Quiet in God.

The Dying Person Contemplates the Joy and Fellowship of Heaven.

EXHORTATION.

After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb! *Rev. 7, 9, 10.*

Could a dying person picture to himself anything sweeter and more pleasant than the joy and fellowship of heaven—a thought which often delights the godly person on earth? For a dying person should (1) regard everything that he beholds on earth as things that he must leave soon and will see nevermore. (2) He should, on the contrary, engage in meditations on heaven, and eagerly think of the future joy of heaven, how after his departure from this life he will be translated to the joys and splendor of heaven, where there is nothing but light, peace, joy, consolation, and glory, where everlasting raptures will delight him for his former sufferings and pains.

(3) A dying person should also engage in meditations on the heavenly fellowship, how he will soon behold the face of the Triune God and meet so many thousands of angels and the elect. When a dying person thus pictures to himself this heavenly fellowship and his future bliss, his suffering will be sweetened and the time of it shortened for him; yea, on account of it he will feel his soul stirred with holy emotions.

PRAYER.

How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts; my soul longeth for the courts of the Lord. Oh, when shall I come where I shall see Thy face, and stand before Thy throne with all angels and the elect? What great glory and bliss shall I meet when I shall have parted from this body and died in peace, because I shall be translated into the home of peace, shall be crowned with glory and honor, and shall be

made a partaker of the splendor of heaven! What glory and joy await me! I shall behold the Triune God face to face. What I have believed here I shall behold yonder. What I could not comprehend here I shall perfectly know and perceive yonder. Yonder I shall be completely suffused with light, illumined and filled with the light of heaven. What joy will it be to look upon the great, majestic God in His glory!

Therefore I sigh and pray with longing: As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God? The highest joy is to see God, in whom we have believed here, although we had never seen Him. This vision will constitute my highest delight, my greatest sweetness, and my most perfect bliss. My sorrow will be changed into joy, my weeping into shouts of triumph, my tribulation into rapture, my misery into delight, my affliction into consolation, my heart's anguish into abundant glory.

In heaven I shall also live in a joyful and blessed fellowship. Here I am among men; yea, I have had to pass my life among friends and foes; but in glory I shall meet so many thousands of holy angels, hovering in great splendor and light around the throne of God and singing: "Holy, holy, holy, is God, the Lord of Sabaoth." I shall there meet all the godly and elect who have lived since the beginning of the world. I shall meet my dear ones and friends who have died in faith before me, and shall live in the sweetest communion with them. How satisfied will my soul be then! Then my longing will become em-

bracing; I shall be with the Lord; no sorrow will touch me. And this shall last not only an hour or a year, but forever and ever, without end.

O sweet and blessed country, The home of God's elect!
O sweet and blessed country That eager hearts expect! Jesus,
in mercy bring us To that dear land of rest, Who art, with God
the Father And Spirit, ever blest. Amen.

HYMN.

O pilgrim, look to Jesus
Once hanging on the tree!
Behold Him bleeding, dying,
A sacrifice for thee!
On Calvary's holy mountain
He died that we might live;
Then bow in deep contrition,
And God will thee forgive.

He is the loving Savior;
Dost thou upon Him lean?
Then fear not to press forward
Toward the land unseen,
Thy Guide has been before thee
Within that realm unknown,
And He will surely bring thee
Before His Father's throne.

Thy course on earth is heavenward,
Through sunshine and 'mid shade,
O'er rugged hills and mountains,
Along the pleasant glade.
Then onward, pilgrim, hie thee,
Through valley and o'er plain;
To-day it may be weary,
To-morrow strong again.

Onward! thy heart e'er cheery
As thou dost tread the way;
The end is not far distant,
And then eternal day.

No more of doubt and sorrow,
 No more of pain or fear,
 For in the great to-morrow
 Thou wilt not shed a tear.

March on beneath the banner
 Thy Captain doth unfurl.
 Thine eye of hope intently
 Upon the gates of pearl,
 Fight manfully each battle,
 The victory is sure,
 To all who trust the Leader
 And to the end endure.

The Dying Person Takes Comfort in the Promised Assistance of the Triune God.

EXHORTATION.

His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me. *Song of Solomon 2, 6.*

The presence of God in our suffering cannot but be sweet and comforting to the soul. God, however, is not only present with all His creatures, to the believers He is nigh also with His special presence in life as well as in death, as He has promised: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Oh, if God were to open the eyes of the godly as He did to Elisha's servant, what a holy assembly would they behold gathered around their bed—so many angels already rejoicing that they may conduct another soul to glory! For frequently godly persons at the moment of their death have joyfully exclaimed and said, "Oh, how light it is around my bed! Do you not see that bright light yonder?" That surely must have been a vision of God's holy angels.

However, a believing soul should be especially assured of the assistance of the Triune God. (1) The Father in heaven will remember His fatherly faithfulness, and come to the aid of His child. (2) Jesus will not forsake in their last agony the souls He has purchased with His own blood. (3) The Holy Ghost also will refresh them in that hour with His strong consolations. Let

hearing and sight fail; let all the senses fail; still the dying person knows that for him shall be fulfilled even in his dying hour the promise: "I will be with him in trouble." Blessed is he whom God permits to experience all this at his death.

PRAYER.

Come, Lord Jesus! Thus I say now with the spiritual bride; yea, come and take my soul to Thee. I have even now tasted Thy sweetness; therefore I am longing and thirsting for the full stream. I do not regard dying as something terrible; for I die in the love of my heavenly Father. The Father who has provided for me, nourished, led, and guided me all my life, should He depart from me now that the end of my life is at hand? Never; He loves me too dearly for that. If a father stays with his sick child and helps him as much as he can, how much more can I comfort myself with the almighty and powerful aid of my Father in heaven! My heavenly Father will now give me the heritage which Jesus has acquired for me by His death. He will bid me enter into the Kingdom which He has prepared for me from the foundation of the world.

Dying does not seem terrible to me; I die united with Jesus Christ. This union has been begun here by faith, and will never be abolished. In this union I am a living member in the body of which Jesus Christ is the Head. If the head knows well the condition of the members, my Jesus, too, knows my condition now. I am in Him, and He is in me, and in holy union with Him I am now ready to die. He has said: "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"; therefore He will be with me also in my dying hour. As He loved His own unto the end

when He gave Himself into death for them, He loves them also when they are about to die. If, then, I am in the arms of Jesus, death is not terrible to me because I have with me Him who by His death has taken away the bitterness of dying. Jesus has even here put on me the garments of salvation and clothed me with the robe of righteousness; yonder He will robe me in the white garment of honor and glory. The Bridegroom of my soul leads me to the marriage-feast; the Lover of my soul makes me share His glory. My Lord now fulfils for me what He said: "Where I am, there shall also My servant be."

Death is not terrible to me; I die in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, who during my present life has consecrated my heart to be a temple; He will remain united with me even in death. He who has so often comforted me in my affliction, gladdened me in my suffering, refreshed me in my misery, sustained me under my cross, will not forsake me in the last hour, but will bear witness to my spirit that I am certainly God's child. If I should even lose my speech, so as not to be able any more to pray, He will make intercession for me before God with groanings that cannot be uttered. Yea, since He is the earnest of our inheritance, He assures me even now that I am an heir of heaven and shall enter into complete possession of it. The Father holds out the crown to me; Jesus leads me by the hand into joy; the Holy Spirit adorns me with light and bliss; the holy angels rejoice over my entrance into the heavenly life of joy; all the elect and godly receive me with rejoicing.

I have been grafted in the Vine, And hence my comfort borrow,
For Thou wilt surely keep me Thine Through fear and pain
and sorrow; Yea, though I die, I die to Thee, Who through Thy
death hast won for me The right to life eternal. Amen.

HYMN.

Jerusalem, my happy home,
Name ever dear to me,
When shall my labors have an end
In joy and peace and thee?

When shall these eyes thy heav'n-built walls
And pearly gates behold;
Thy bulwarks with salvation strong
And streets of shining gold?

O when, thou city of my God,
Shall I thy courts ascend
Where evermore the angels sing,
Where Sabbaths have no end?

There happier bowers than Eden's bloom
Nor sin nor sorrow know;
Blest seats! Through rude and stormy scenes
I onward press to you.

Why should I shrink from pain and woe,
Or feel at death dismay?
I've Canaan's goodly land in view
And realms of endless day.

Apostles, martyrs, prophets, there
Around my Savior stand;
And soon my friends in Christ below
Will join the glorious band.

The Dying Person Is Ready to Fall Asleep in Jesus.

EXHORTATION.

Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. *Acts 7, 59.*

Dying persons frequently complain that they are distracted with all sorts of thoughts which will not yield nor pass. To dispel them, a believer will do well, (1) if by faith and in holy con-

templation he pictures to himself Jesus upon the cross, and at the same time revolves in his heart these pious thoughts: The wounds of Jesus were inflicted for my sake; they shall be my only refuge in death. For me also the blood of Jesus was shed; I, too, am washed and sanctified with this blood. The extended arms of Jesus desire to embrace me also and to draw me to heaven. He dies upon the cross in order that my death may be sweetened for me, and that I may by death be led into everlasting life. These and similar reflections will dispel earthly thoughts, and make the mind quite calm and still and the heart joyful.

(2) While engaged in these reflections, the believing Christian should also put his entire trust in this Savior of the world. He should make the righteousness and merit of Christ his own, come before God with them, and say: For the sake of the righteousness, blood, death, and merit of my Jesus be merciful to me, O God. Trusting in these, I live and die and wish to enter into the joy of heaven.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, dearest Savior, if I am now to depart from this world, — for the signs of my death are continually multiplying and announce to me that the end of my life is very near, — I turn to Thee alone and say: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. O my Redeemer, Thou hast redeemed me with Thy holy blood, with Thy innocent suffering and death, from sin and from the power of the devil. Let this Thy blood avail for me now, that I may stand justified by it before Thy judgment-seat. If Satan would raise charges against me, I shall show him Thy bleeding wounds. If my sins would condemn me, I shall grasp the ransom that was paid for my sins, Thy holy blood. In my dying anguish I cling to Thy all-sufficient merit. Thou art my Savior: oh, then, save me! Forgive me my sins; give me Thy perfect righteousness; lead me into everlasting bliss.

Thou art the Life; therefore I shall not die,

although my life ends, because I live in Thee and Thou in me. This life will now become perfect, because I shall live with Thee forever, and because neither things present nor things to come shall separate me from Thee. Thou art the Way; lead me through the dark valley of death into everlasting life. Thou art the Truth; Thou hast hitherto fulfilled all Thy gracious promises in me; therefore fulfil these also in which Thou promisest me: "Where I am, there shall also My servant be. And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." Take me now to Thee, and let me be where Thou art. Lord, let Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word. Draw me after Thee, into the full enjoyment of Thy heavenly treasures.

I picture to myself how Thou didst die for me on the cross, how Thou didst shed Thy blood, how Thou didst lay down Thy life for me. May Thy holy wounds let me obtain grace and mercy. Thou art the Lamb of God, who didst permit Thyself to be slaughtered for me on the cross, and through Thy blood I am reconciled with God. Thou art my High Priest, who makest intercession for me. Thou art the Hero who comest to my help; Thou art the Prince of Peace, who receivest me into the home of peace. O Jesus, I come to Thee; therefore I grasp and hold Thee by faith and say: My dear Jesus I'll not leave, Who for me Himself has given; Therefore unto Him I'll cleave, Nor from Him be ever driven. Life from Him doth light receive; My dear Jesus I'll not leave.

Yea, I will now think of Jesus only: He shall be the Light and Salvation of my soul, the Strength

of my life, my Sun and Delight, my Wish and Desire, my Thinking and Planning, my All. Away, vain thoughts! I will delight myself in the merit of Jesus and in the blood which He shed for me; I will place before myself His holy wounds; I will take comfort in His bitter suffering; and my last word shall be Jesus, yea, my last thought shall be Jesus, Jesus.

Be Thou my Consolation And Shield when I must die; Remind me of Thy Passion When my last hour draws nigh. Mine eyes shall then behold Thee, Upon Thy cross shall dwell, My heart by faith enfold Thee. Who dieth thus dies well! Amen.

HYMN.

For me to live is Jesus,
To die is gain for me,
To Him I gladly yield me,
And die right cheerfully.

From hence I go with gladness
To Christ my Brother's side,
That I may soon be with Him,
And e'er with Him abide.

I have o'ercome life's crosses;
Grief, pain, and sorrow cease;
Through His five wounds most holy
With God I am at peace.

When all my powers are breaking,
My breath comes heavily,
Nor word more I can utter.
Lord, hear my sighs to Thee!

When reason, sense, and thinking
Fail like a flickering light,
That to and fro doth waver,
Ere 'tis extinguished quite:

Then let me softly, gently,
Lord, fall asleep in Thee,
When by Thy will and counsel
My last hour comes to me.

As to the oak the ivy,
So let me cleave to Thee,
And live in heavenly glory
With Thee eternally.

Amen! This wilt Thou, Jesus,
Grant graciously to me:
Endow me with Thy Spirit
That I die happily.

The Dying Person Prays for a Blessed End.

EXHORTATION.

It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. *1 Kings 19, 4.*

In the Old Testament, when a person brought an offering to the Lord God, it had to be a voluntary, not a compulsory offering. This rule applies also to our dying: a person must not die with displeasure, nor by constraint, nor with grumbling and disgust, but (1) a person should, while he is still in good health, learn from the Word of God what glory there is prepared for us in the life to come, learn about the crown, the white robe, and the joy which we shall obtain after this life. (2) He should also acquaint himself with the Way that leads to this glory, which is Jesus Christ, in order that he may persevere in faith until death.

(3) On the approach of the hour which God has appointed for his departure from this world the dying person should lift up his eyes unto heaven with joy, and beseech God for a blessed end. This may be done in the following manner: He may commit his body and soul to God, continually think of his dear Savior, pray fervently, and thus await his last hour. At the same time he may call upon God to grant him a quiet, gentle, rational, and blessed end. If unbecoming actions occur occasionally, those gathered at

the bedside of the dying person need not worry too much about this, as he is less sensible of it than they think, and meanwhile he remains in sweet communion with his beloved Redeemer.

PRAYER.

Merciful and gracious God, I perceive that the time of my departure is at hand, that I shall depart in peace, and lie down to my rest. My sight fails me, my strength is leaving me, and it seems as if my change were at hand. Therefore I come to Thee and offer my last prayer, which is this: My spirit I commend to Thee, O Lord, a blessed end give me Through Jesus Christ, yea, Amen.

Lord God heavenly Father, who hast created me, and hast hitherto provided for me and sustained me, mercifully receive my soul. O Jesus, who hast redeemed and washed me with Thy blood, let me die saved in true faith, trusting in Thy merit and blood. O Lord Jesus, into Thy hands I commend my spirit. O precious Holy Spirit, my Comforter and Aid, do not forsake me now; give me courage and the assurance that I am an heir of everlasting life; do Thou pray in me and with me, and make intercession for me before God with groanings that cannot be uttered.

Behold, I am ready to leave this earth, and am longing only for Thee, and to be with Thee, O Triune God. As the children of Israel had their year of jubilee, when every slave had his liberty and his property restored to him, so, O my God, my year of jubilee begins when I die, and, delivered from the service of every sin and the burden of every cross, I attain to the perfect liberty of the children of God in the life everlasting.

O my Jesus, open to me the door of heaven, ac-

company and guide me to everlasting life, to the congregation of the saints in light. O my God, grant me a rational end, that I may keep my mind to the last moment of my life. Keep me in holy and good thoughts, that I may ever remember Jesus Christ. And if my eyes should soon grow dim, refresh my soul inwardly with Thy heavenly comfort and light. Let Jesus ever stand before the eyes of my soul; grant that I may rejoice in the blood that He shed for me, and hide myself in His riven side. take comfort in His merit, and by true faith lay hold of His righteousness.

If it please Thee, grant me a gentle death. Preserve me from impatient actions, temptations, and distracting thoughts. Let my heart, which has been Thy dwelling here, gently throb its last. Let me die calm in Thy arms. Grant me a blessed end, that I may soon behold Thy holy countenance with rejoicing.

O Triune God, bless my going out from this present mortality and my coming into happy eternity. The Lord bless me and keep me; the Lord make His face shine upon me, and be gracious unto me; the Lord lift up His countenance upon me, and give me peace! In the name of the Triune God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I live and die; in His name I close my eyes and commend myself to God and His mercy.

I fall asleep in Jesus' wounds. There pardon for my sins abounds; Yea, Jesus' blood and righteousness My jewels are, my glorious dress, Wherein before my God I stand, When I shall reach the heavenly land. With peace and joy I now depart, God's child I am with all my heart; I thank thee, death, thou leadest me To that true life where I would be. So cleansed by Christ I fear not death. Lord Jesus, strengthen Thou my faith! Amen.

HYMN.

When the day of toil is done,
When the race of life is run,
Father, grant Thy wearied one
Rest forevermore.

When the strife of sin is stilled,
When the foe within is killed,
Be Thy gracious word fulfilled, —
“Peace forevermore.”

When the darkness melts away
At the breaking of the day,
Bid us hail the cheering ray, —
Light forevermore.

When the heart by sorrow tried
Feels at length its throbs subside,
Bring us where all tears are dried,
Joy forevermore.

When for vanished days we yearn,
Days that never can return,
Teach us in Thy love to learn
Love forevermore.

When the breath of life is flown,
When the grave must claim its own,
Lord of life, be ours Thy crown —
Life forevermore.

PRAYER OF THOSE PRESENT FOR THE DYING.

O holy Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Thou hearest prayer; therefore all flesh cometh unto Thee. Behold, we are now coming before Thee and offer up our prayer in behalf of this dying Christian.

Lord God, Father in heaven, have mercy upon him. Thou hast created him in Thy image; he is

Thy creature; he is also Thy child, whom Thou hast in Holy Baptism received into Thy grace; therefore have mercy upon him. Behold, Thy child is sick; Thy child is about to die; let him now obtain his child's portion, the heritage in heaven, the salvation of his soul. Forgive him all his sins which during his entire life he has committed, and look upon him with favor.

Lord God Son, the Savior of the world, have mercy upon this dying Christian. Thou hast redeemed him with Thy holy blood; Thou didst die for him also; therefore do not charge his sins against him, but impute to him Thy righteousness and Thy merit. Wash him with Thy holy blood; cover him with Thy righteousness, and let him now appear before the throne of God, cleansed with Thy blood.

Lord God Holy Ghost, have mercy upon this dying Christian. Preserve him in faith; witness to his spirit that he is truly God's child, and make intercession for him before God with groanings that cannot be uttered. Sanctify him, strengthen him, and lead him into everlasting life.

O Holy Trinity, receive this dying Christian with favor. Remember not the sins of his youth nor his transgressions; according to Thy mercy remember Thou him for Thy goodness' sake, O Lord. Receive his spirit into Thy hands, and let it share eternal joy. On the last day grant to the body which is now dying a glad and glorious resurrection. Meanwhile let it gently rest in the cool earth, until at the general resurrection body and soul shall be reunited and enter into the bliss of heaven.

But, Lord, since his agony and anguish are increasing, let not the remembrance of Jesus and Him

crucified pass out of his mind. When his eyes grow dim, let a bright light shine in his soul. Yea, O Jesus, Thou bright and morning star, enlighten him unto everlasting life. When he can no longer see us, grant him, O Triune God, constantly to behold Thee by faith, until He shall see Thee face to face. When his lips close and he can pray no longer, Lord Jesus, do Thou intercede for him; be his Advocate with the Father in heaven; help him to battle and to overcome, and let even the sighing of his heart be acceptable to Thee. When the death-sweat breaks out on him, strengthen him, and be his support.

O Triune God, abide with him, and keep him in faith until he has finished his course happily and joyfully. Lord God Father, what Thou hast created; Lord God Son, what Thou hast redeemed; Lord God Holy Ghost, what Thou hast sanctified, we commit into Thy hands. To Thy name be praise, honor, and glory now and forever!

Who knows how near my end may be? Time speeds away, and death comes on; How swiftly, ah! how suddenly, May death be here and life be gone! My God, for Jesus' sake I pray Thy peace may bless my dying day. Amen.

Sentences, Scripture-Passages, and Prayers which Those Present may Recite to the Dying.*

Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands. *Is. 49, 14—16.*

* Godly Christians do well if they familiarize themselves with these brief prayers in the days of their health, in order that, if they should lose their hearing through their sickness, they may rouse themselves unto God in their dying hour.

If God Himself be for me, I may a host defy, For when I pray,
before me My foes confounded fly. If Christ, my Head and Master,
Befriend me from above, What foe or what disaster Can drive me
from His love? This I believe—yea, rather, Of this I make my
boast, That God is my dear Father, The Friend who loves me most;
And that, whate'er betide me, My Savior is at hand, Through
stormy seas to guide me, And bring me safe to land.

O kind and merciful God, help me in my suffering
and in my dying hour. O my God, Thou hast
always been my gracious God and my Support; be
with me now. O Jesus, abide with me; for it is
toward evening, and the day of my life is far spent.
O precious Holy Ghost, strengthen me, keep me
steadfast in the faith until my end. Enlighten me
to everlasting life. I desire to die trusting in the
blood and wounds of Jesus. Unto Him I live, unto
Him I die; I trust in His merit.

As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul
after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.
When shall I come and appear before God? *Ps. 42, 1. 2.*

When, on our vision dawning, Will break the wished-for hour
Of that all-glorious morning, When Christ shall come with power?
O come, thou welcome day! When we, our Savior meeting, His
second advent greeting, Shall hail the heaven-sent ray.

Jesus, Thou Light of the soul, when my eyes are
growing dim, let the brightness of heaven rise in my
soul. Forsake me not when my eyes are closing in
death. Show Thyself to me, and let me see Thy
image, bleeding, dying for me on the cross. Though
I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; for my Jesus is with me. Yea,
my Jesus, abide with me; strengthen me in the
faith, and let me be Thine own here in time and
hereafter in eternity.

I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me; Thou art my Help and my Deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.

Ps. 40, 17.

My sins, dear Lord, disturb me sore, My conscience cannot slumber; But though as sands upon the shore My sins may be in number, I will not quail, but think of Thee; Thy death, Thy sorrow, borne for me, Thy sufferings, shall uphold me.

Yes, my Jesus, in Thee I trust with all my heart. O come and release me! Bring rest to my weary body and receive my soul into the everlasting joy of heaven. O Jesus, hear my faint sighing; be my support in my anguish. O my Savior and Deliverer, deliver me, unloose me, and save me. Let Satan have no power over me. Open now the door of heaven and everlasting life for me. Come quickly, deliver me, refresh me, bless me, have mercy on me!

Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.

Is. 41, 10.

O Jesus Christ, Thou Lamb of God, Once slain to take away our load, Now let Thy cross, Thine agony, Avail to save and solace me; Thy death to open heav'n and there Bid me the joy of angels share.

O Jesus, my only Advocate with Thy heavenly Father, who sittest at His right hand and makest intercession for us, plead for me now in the hour of my death. I fear not; for Thou art with me. O blessed Holy Spirit, Thou Comforter in every need, abide with me with Thy consolation to my end. I have powerful Help; my Father is with me, yea, the angels also are with me; therefore I will die rejoicing.

Nevertheless I am continually with Thee; Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. *Ps. 138, 23, 24.*

O Lord, my God, I cry to Thee, In my distress Thou helpest me, My soul and body I commend Into Thy hands; Thine angel send To guide me home, and cheer my heart, Since Thou dost call me to depart.

By Thy bitter agony and bloody sweat help me, O Lord, my God! I leave Thee not; oh, depart not from me! O Jesus, when my last struggle begins, help me to wrestle and to overcome! When the anguish of my heart becomes great, bring me out of my distresses. I am Thine own; therefore, lead me through all my anguish to joy and bliss and glory. If Thou art with me, I am not afraid; I am happy, I shall enter into the joy everlasting.

Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. *Matt. 25, 23.*

Ah! who would, then, not depart with gladness, To inherit heaven for earthly sadness? Who here would languish Longer in bemoaning and in anguish? Come, O Christ and loose the chains that bind us! Lead us forth, and cast this world behind us! With Thee, th' Anointed, Finds the soul its joy and rest appointed.

O Jesus, by Thy power and by the aid of Thy Holy Spirit I shall remain faithful to Thee unto death. I will not forsake Thee, O Friend of my soul; I do not flee from Thee, my Shepherd; I leave Thee not, O Bridegroom of my soul! Besides Thee there is nothing that can delight me. Lead me, O dearest Friend, out of misery to joy, out of wretchedness to bliss!

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.

Job 19, 25—27.

For me to live is Jesus, To die is gain for me, To Him I gladly yield me, And die right cheerfully. From hence I go with gladness To Christ my Brother's side. That I may soon be with Him, And e'er with Him abide.

Yes, to Thee, O Triune God, I now commend myself for protection and mercy. I commit my dearly purchased soul to Thee. I die, and I shall rise again; I die, and I shall live forever in heavenly joy. O Triune God, bring me to my rest, to glory! Shorten my pains, sweeten my dying hour; comfort me with the inward consolations of the Holy Spirit, and do not take Him from me. Let me soon behold Thy glorious face in the everlasting joy of heaven.

As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness. *Ps. 17, 15.*

Yea, I see what here was told me, See that wondrous glory shine; Feel the spotless robes enfold me, Know a golden crown is mine, Thus before the throne so glorious Now I stand a soul victorious, Gazing on that joy for aye That shall never pass away.

O my Jesus, my soul rejoices, remembering Thy glory and the joy which Thou hast prepared for me. I quit this world gladly, because I am coming to my Jesus, the Bridegroom of my soul. How glad, how happy shall I be when He will lead me, His bride, to the marriage-feast, put upon me the white robe, place the crown on my head, and after so many sufferings, pains, and afflictions which I have endured, comfort me without end!

The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.

Is. 57, 1. 2.

A slumber I know in Jesus' name, A rest from all toil and sorrow; Earth tenderly takes my weary frame To sleep till the blissful morrow. In heaven my soul with God abides, Forgotten are cares and trials.

I know that when I die, I go to God out of all misery, passing from burdens to delights, from anxiety to peace, from vanity to bliss, from worry to rest, from sorrow to joy. Therefore my soul rejoices. O my God, here I am; receive my soul, glorify it, grant it everlasting life. My Jesus, I am Thine, Thou art mine; in death and life we shall remain inseparable.

We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. *2 Cor. 5, 1.*

There is joy beyond our telling Where so many saints have gone; Thousands, thousands there are dwelling, Worshiping before the throne, There the seraphim are shining, Evermore in chorus joining: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord! Triune God, for aye adored!"

O dear Lord Jesus, seal in my heart this comfort, that when I quit this tabernacle and this dying-bed, I shall enter the glorious dwelling in heaven. What a glorious house, what a joyous place Thou hast prepared for me, where there is no more anxiety, misery, and wretchedness, but joy, consolation, glory, bliss, light! Oh, that we were there! Forsake me not; I will nevermore forsake Thee. I will cling to Thee, rely on Thy mercy, and hide myself in Thy wounds. I die trusting in Thy death; make me righteous and save me by Thy death.

The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. *Is. 35, 10.*

The morning shall awaken, And shadows shall decay, And each true-hearted servant Shall shine as doth the day; Yes, God, my King and portion, In fulness of His grace, We then shall see forever, And worship face to face.

Remember, O Jesus, that I have been redeemed by Thy blood, and let me soon enter Thy heavenly Zion. Long enough I have eaten the bread of sorrows here; let me soon taste the sweet food of angels, the manna of heaven! Sighings and sorrows have been my daily occupation here; let me hear joy and gladness. Let my soul catch a glimpse of Thy glory; gladden me after my suffering; refresh me in Thee and with Thee forever.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing. *2 Tim. 4, 7. 8.*

There is the throne of David; And there, from care released, The songs of them that triumph, The shout of them that feast; And they who, with their Leader, Have conquered in the fight, Forever and forever Are clad in robes of white.

O Jesus, help me to a happy victory when my last struggle begins! Be at my side, and all will become easy for me. Strengthen me when I am faint; O my Helper, support me in my anguish and weakness! Let Thy grace strengthen me; let Thy blood refresh me; let Thy hand sustain me; let Thy holy merit cover my sins; hold me, wretched one, in Thine arms; revive me when I faint. Oh, how gloriously shall I be adorned and crowned by Thee

after death! Show me the crown which Thou hast laid up for me, and refresh my spirit with Thy comforting presence.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. *Rev. 2, 10.*

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment. *Rev. 3, 5.*

Exult, O dust and ashes! The Lord shall be thy Part: His only, His forever, Thou shalt be and thou art! Jesus, in mercy bring us Soon to that land of rest; Who art, with God the Father And Spirit, ever blest!

The love of my Jesus I shall never surrender. I have loved Him in the days of my health, and I will love Him unto death. O Jesus, for the sake of Thy holy wounds keep me in Thy love. I will remain faithful to Thee unto death, and die faithful to Thee. With Jesus in my heart, with Christ in my mind, I die in Jesus' name.

I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. *Rom. 8, 38, 39.*

Jesus, priceless Treasure, Source of purest pleasure, Truest Friend to me! Long my heart hath panted, Till it well-nigh fainted, Thirsting after Thee. Thine I am, O spotless Lamb! I will suffer naught to hide Thee, Ask for naught beside Thee.

Yes, that is the conclusion which I have reached: My dear Jesus I'll leave never! I abide in faith, I cling to Him. Death separates the soul from the body, but not my soul from Jesus. Jesus is mine, I am His. I place myself in the arms of my Jesus, and there I will live and die in peace. How blessed, oh, how blessed I am!

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him. *James 1, 12.*

Jerusalem, thou city fair and high, Would God I were in thee!
My longing heart fain, fain to thee would fly, It will not stay with me;
Far over vale and mountain, Far over field and plain, It hastes to seek its Fountain And quit this world of pain.

O yes, Lord Jesus, come to me; come soon, without delay, and take me hence in peace. Give me patience and strength; I commit myself entirely, my body and my soul, to Thee. Keep me in faith unto my blessed end. O Jesus, by Thy great mercy and grace help me to attain to eternal life and joy. Lord God, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations; be my Refuge also now, my Salvation, my God, my Consolation, my Deliverer, my God who has mercy on me, and my Savior. Receive my soul which is sighing for Thee. Oh, how I long to behold God face to face, to be with the angels and the elect, and to walk in heavenly splendor and brightness.

Into Thine hand I commit my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, God of truth. *Ps. 31, 5.*

Arrayed in glorious grace Shall these vile bodies shine, And every shape, and every face, Look heavenly and divine.

Now that I am dying, my only refuge, O Triune God, is to Thee: to the mercy of my heavenly Father, to the bloody wounds of Jesus Christ, to the loving-kindness of the Holy Spirit. To this Triune God I commend my body and soul. Oh, receive this little dove of Thine; I come flying on swift wing.

Lord Jesus, who dost love me, O spread Thy wings above me, And shield me from alarm! Though Satan would devour me, Let angel-guards sing o'er me: "This child of God shall meet no harm!"

Ye are come unto Mount Sion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. *Heb. 12, 22. 23.*

O happy day and yet far happier hour, When wilt thou come at last, When fearless to my Father's love and power, Whose promise standeth fast, My soul I gladly render? For surely will His hand Lead her with guidance tender To heaven, her fatherland.

My Jesus, how glorious will be the sight when I shall meet Thee in Thy glory and all the angels and the elect in heaven! I rejoice in expectation of that moment. I quit this earth and enter glory; I leave behind misery and receive joy; I leave men and come among the holy angels.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.

Heb. 13, 8.

Jesus, Thou art mine forever, Dearer far than earth to me; Neither life nor death shall sever Those sweet ties which bind to Thee. All were drear to me and lonely If Thy presence gladdened not; While I sing to Thee, Thee only, Mine's an ever blissful lot.

In this faith, O my Jesus, let me abide without wavering. Let my weary heart taste the sweetness of Thy name of Savior and be refreshed. Let the power of Thy death, which has fully atoned for all, avail for me in my dying hour and at the judgment-seat of God, that I may here be righteous and pure, yonder blessed forever in Thee.

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. *John 10, 27. 28.*

I have been grafted in the Vine, And hence my comfort borrow,
For Thou wilt surely keep me Thine Through fear and pain and
sorrow; Yes, though I die, I die to Thee, Who through Thy death
hast won for me The right to life eternal.

O yes, Jesus, my Shepherd, now bring me, Thy
poor sheep, to the joy of heaven. Let not Satan
pluck me out of Thy hand. Thou art mightier and
stronger than Satan. Thine I am, and Thine I will
remain. Satan has no claim and title to me, but Thy
purchased possession I have been and shall be for-
ever. Take my soul like a weary lamb into Thine
arms and bring it to the bliss of heaven. How
happy, how blessed shall I be when I shall be with
my Jesus!

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth;
yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and
their works do follow them. *Rev. 14, 13.*

There is an hour of peaceful rest, To mourning wand'ers
given; There is a joy for souls distressed, A balm for ev'ry wounded
breast: 'Tis found above in heaven. There is a soft, a downy bed,
'Tis fair as breath of even; A couch for weary mortals spread
Where they may rest the aching head, And find repose — in heaven.
There is a home for weary souls, By sin and sorrow driven, When
tossed on life's tempestuous shoals, Where storms arise and ocean
rolls, And all is drear — but heaven.

Lord, instil into my soul this comfort, that I shall
die in Thee. O Jesus, Thou hast lived in me, and
I in Thee; therefore, I wish also to die in Thee, in
Thy love, in Thy wounds, in Thy grace. Cause my
misery and grief, my pains and sufferings to cease,
and bring me into the blessed life everlasting, where
I shall rest from my labors, my sufferings, and
pains. O Jesus, hear me; yea, come, Lord Jesus!

The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. *2 Tim. 4, 18.*

"Forever with the Lord!" Amen! so let it be; Life from the dead is in that word, 'Tis immortality. Here in the body pent, Absent from Him I roam, Yet nightly pitch my moving tent A day's march nearer home. My Father's house on high, Home of my soul, how near At times to faith's foreseeing eye The golden gates appear!

O great God, remember me now in mercy and have compassion upon me. Give me a rational, quiet, and peaceful end. My dying day is the day of my deliverance, and my dying hour is the hour when I shall enter into the joy everlasting. Keep me in a rational mind to the end of my life. Let me hear with joy the comfort that is promised me, and if it be Thy holy will, grant that I may be able to bear witness of my faith and my hope to those surrounding my bed, and may thus be delivered by a peaceful end from every evil work.

Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. *Matt. 25, 34.*

Ah! then my spirit faints To reach the land I love, The bright inheritance of saints, Jerusalem above. "Forever with the Lord!" Father, if 'tis Thy will, The promise of that faithful word E'en here to me fulfil. Be Thou at my right hand, Then I can never fail; Uphold Thou me, and I shall stand; Fight, and I must prevail.

O my Jesus, let me, too, hear Thy welcome when I part from this body. Speak to my soul in that hour: Come, thou blessed of My Father. Yea, let my soul and body be led to glory with these words. Meanwhile I grasp Thee by faith, and in Thee and through Thee I obtain the blessing and the inheritance.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness. *Is. 61, 10.*

O Jerusalem, how glorious Dost thou shine, thou city fair! Lo! I hear the tones victorious Ever sweetly sounding there. O the bliss that there surprises! Lo! the sun of morn now rises, And the breaking day I see That shall never end for me.

The joy of heaven, the white robe of glory, sweetens to me all the bitterness of death. Death is not bitter to me. Jesus is with me, who comforts and sustains me. O my God, who hast clothed me with the robe of righteousness, put upon me the heavenly garment of joy. Thy righteousness is my righteousness, and now that I have been justified by faith I know that I have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; yea, I may expect life and salvation. How beautifully arrayed shall I stand before Thee there!

God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. *John 3, 16.*

Ah, Lord, if but Thee I have Naught of other good I crave; Bright is even death's dark road If but Thou art there, my God!

O dearest God and Father, let me now depart quietly and in peace, trusting in Jesus Christ. I know that Thou hast loved me also and given me Thy Son. I, too, have believed in Him, and wish to persevere in this faith to the last moment of my life. Give me the assurance by Thy Holy Spirit that I shall not be lost. Strengthen me in this faith, that I may soon behold in the life everlasting what I have believed here. O Jesus, be at my side; do not forsake me!

Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot. *1 Pet. 1, 18. 19.*

Lord Jesus Christ, true man and God, Who borest anguish, scorn, the rod, And diedst at last upon the tree To gain Thy Father's grace for me: I pray Thee, through that bitter woe, Let me, a sinner, mercy know When comes the hour of failing breath, And I must wrestle, Lord, with death. When from my sight all fades away, And when my tongue no more can say, And when mine ears no more can hear, And when my heart is racked with fear, When all my mind is darkened o'er, And human help can do no more: Then come, Lord Jesus, come with speed, And help me in the hour of need.

I come before Thee, O great God, relying not on my righteousness, but on the righteousness of Jesus Christ which I have made my own by faith. O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on me. O righteous God, do not look upon my sins and uncleanness, but upon the righteousness and holiness of Jesus. This I apprehend; in His wounds I hide myself, trusting in His merit I die; for His sake be gracious and merciful to me.

Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. *Acts 4, 12.*

O Father, cover all my sins With Jesus' merits, who alone The pardon that I covet wins And makes His long-sought rest my own; My God for Jesus' sake I pray Thy peace may bless my dying day. His sorrows and His cross I know Make death-beds soft, and light the grave, They comfort in the hour of woe, They give me all I fain would have; My God, for Jesus' sake I pray Thy peace may bless my dying day.

Jesus, my only Salvation and my Refuge, I come to Thee in my dying hour. Oh, have compassion

upon me; do not forsake me. The sweet name of Jesus, the remembrance of the blood which He shed, of His stripes, of His holy person shall now remain on my lips, in my heart, and in my thoughts. Lord Jesus, unto Thee I live; Lord Jesus, unto Thee I die; Lord Jesus, living and dying I am Thine. Amen.

If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 2, 1. 2.

And so I stretch mine arms to Thee, And gladly hence betake me; Peaceful and calm my sleep shall be, No human voice can wake me. But Christ is with me through the strife, And He will bear me into life, And open heav'n before me.

O great God, the time is approaching when I must depart from this world, and appear before Thy judgment-seat. O Heavenly Father, have mercy on me, and graciously receive me as Thy child whom Thou hast created and loved. O Jesus, plead for me; Thou art my Mediator, Advocate, and Savior. Take away my sins; clothe me with Thy righteousness, and I am saved. O precious Holy Ghost, dwell and abide in my heart, to bring me to my heavenly habitation.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.

John 5, 24.

So when my latest breath Shall rend the veil in twain, By death I shall escape from death, And life eternal gain. Knowing as I am known, How shall I love that word, And oft repeat before the throne, "Forever with the Lord!"

My Savior, graciously fulfil this promise also to me. Let me come before the judgment-seat and there obtain mercy for Thy sake. But let me not come into judgment, nor hear anything about the sentence of death. Keep me in faith to the end, that I, too, may receive the end of faith, the salvation of my soul.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Heb. 4, 16.

Jesus, Lover of my soul, Let me to Thy bosom fly, While the waters nearer roll, While the tempest still is high! Hide me, O my Savior, hide, Till the storm of life is past; Safe into the haven guide; O receive my soul at last! Other refuge have I none; Hangs my helpless soul on Thee; Leave, ah, leave me not alone, Still support and comfort me! All my trust on Thee is stayed, All my help from Thee I bring: Cover my defenseless head With the shadow of Thy wing.

Oh, yes, for Jesus' sake I shall obtain mercy. Lord God Father in heaven, have compassion upon me; Lord God Son, the Savior of the world, have compassion upon me; Lord God Holy Ghost, have compassion upon me, and be gracious and merciful to me. Amen.

God hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. *2 Cor. 5, 21.*

Chief of sinners though I be, Jesus shed His blood for me, Died, that I might live on high, Lived that I might never die; As the branch is to the vine, I am His, and He is mine.

Jesus, Thou hast taken away my sins and hast bestowed on me Thy righteousness. What is mine, my sins and debts, has been laid on Thee; what is Thine, Thy righteousness, has been given to me. I rejoice in this exchange and comfort myself

with it. Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness, My beauty are, my glorious dress, Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed, With joy shall I lift up my head. In Jesus I am righteous; in Him I am saved. In my dying hour I wrap myself in His righteousness, and can die cheerfully and find favor with God.

God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. *Rev. 21, 4.*

O how blest are ye whose toils are ended, Who through death have unto God ascended! Ye have arisen From the cares which keep us still in prison. Christ has wiped away your tears forever; Ye have that for which we still endeavor; To you are chanted Songs that ne'er to mortal ears were granted. Come, O Christ, and loose the chains that bind us; Lead us forth, and cast this world behind us. With Thee, th' Anointed, Finds the soul its joy and rest appointed.

O Jesus, I wait with joy for the hour when with glorified eyes I shall behold Thy glad countenance. Then my body will shine like the sun, and my eyes shall no longer be moist with tears, but filled with light and luster. With Thee I find joy and consolation. Here I am still sojourning as a stranger in an inn, but when I am with Thee, I shall be in my true and everlasting fatherland.

If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin. *1 John 1, 7.*

And when Thy glory I shall see And taste Thy kingdom's pleasure, Thy blood my royal robe shall be, And joy beyond all measure; It then shall be my glorious crown. Thus I'll appear before the throne Of God, and need not hide me; And shall, by Him to Thee betrothed, By Thee in bridal garments clothed, Stand as a bride beside Thee.

I am in the fellowship of my Jesus; I live in it and die in it. O Jesus, Thou art in me, and I am in Thee. There is no condemnation for me, because I am in Thy fellowship. I am now entering into glory. The blood of Jesus sanctifies, clothes, adorns, and cleanses me. O Heavenly Father, behold, it is the righteousness of Thy Son in which I come to Thee.

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. *John 1, 29.*

O Lamb of God most holy, Upon the cursed tree slain, E'er patient, meek, and lowly, 'Though heaped with hate and disdain. All sins Thou borest for us, Else had despair reigned o'er us. Have mercy on us, O Jesus!

O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me! O Christ Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me! O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant me Thy peace here and hereafter!

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.

Luke 2, 29. 30.

In peace and joy I now depart, At God's disposing; For full of comfort is my heart, Soft reposing; So the Lord hath promised me, And death is but a slumber. 'Tis Christ that wrought this work for me, The faithful Savior, Whom Thou hast made mine eyes to see By Thy favor; Now I know He is my Life, My help in need and dying.

Yes, the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep also my heart and mind in Christ Jesus unto life everlasting! Yonder are the homes

of peace; yonder they are shouting, Victory! Yonder they are waving the palms of victory. Oh, would that I were already there!

Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory. *John 17, 24.*

Forever living there in bliss. Oh, let us not that glory miss! Dear Lord, forgive us all our guilt, Help us to wait until Thou wilt That we depart; and let our faith Be brave, and conquer e'en in death, Firm resting in Thy sacred Word, Until we sleep in Thee, our Lord.

O Jesus, what a glad and happy meeting it will be when I shall come to Thee and behold Thee face to face! Even here I have loved Thee before I have seen Thee; what unspeakable joy will thrill my heart when I come where Thou art, among all the saints and elect! Oh, how great is Thy glory! In this life I have not heard half of what I shall see with my eyes yonder. Draw me unto Thee, and prepare me for a blessed entrance into Thy glory.

None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. *Rom. 14, 7. 8.*

O Lord, I love Thee from my heart; I pray Thee, ne'er from me depart, With tender mercy cheer me; I scorn the richest earthly lot, E'en heav'n and earth attract me not If only Thou be near me. Yea, though my heart be like to break, Thou shalt my Trust that naught can shake, My Portion, and my Comfort be, Who by Thy blood hast purchased me, Lord Jesus Christ, My God and Lord, my God and Lord! Forsake me not who trusts Thy Word.

O great God, I have become Thine in Holy Baptism; I have remained Thine by faith; let me be Thine own now that I am dying. O Jesus Christ,

Son of God, Thou hast atoned for me; enclose me in Thy wounds. Thou art my only Consolation and Help. Amen.

Remember that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.

2 Tim. 2, 8.

Be Thou my Consolation And Shield when I must die; Remind me of Thy Passion When my last hour draws nigh. Mine eyes shall then behold Thee, Upon Thy cross shall dwell, My heart by faith enfold Thee. Who dieth thus dies well.

Jesus is deeply graven in my heart. O yes, I now remember, O Jesus, Thy anguish and pain, the blood Thou didst shed, and Thy holy wounds. Jesus, I embrace Thee, I press Thee to my heart; do not depart from me. I am longing for Thee, O my Savior. Would that I were with Thee!

Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise. *Luke 23, 42. 43.*

There is a fountain filled with blood Drawn from Immanuel's veins, And sinners plunged beneath that flood Lose all their guilty stains. The dying thief rejoiced to see That fountain in his day; And there have I, as vile as he, Washed all my sins away. E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream Thy flowing wounds supply, Redeeming love has been my theme, And shall be, till I die.

O my Jesus, my only desire is for Thy grace and mercy. Oh, receive my soul, purchased with Thy precious blood, into Thy holy hands! I commit it to Thee, to be ushered into the joy of paradise. With the believing thief I pray: Lord, remember me. Remember me as Thy child, purchased with Thy blood to be Thine own. Let me be with Thee to-day in Thy glory.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. *1 Tim. 1, 15.*

Through Jesus' bloody merit I am at peace with God; What, then, can daunt my spirit, However dark my road? My courage shall not fail me, For God is on my side; Though hell itself assail me, Its rage I may deride. There's nothing that can sever Me from the love of God; No want, no pain whatever, No famine, peril, blood. Though thousand foes surround me, And in their base design A sheep for slaughter count me, The victory still is mine. Yea, neither life's temptation, Nor death's terrific hour, Nor angels of high station, Nor any other power, Nor things that now are present, Nor things that are to come, Nor height, however pleasant, Nor depth of deepest gloom, Nor any creature ever Shall from the love of God Me, the poor sinner, sever; For in my Savior's blood This love its fountain taketh; He hears my faithful prayer, And nevermore forsaketh Me, His dear child and heir.

Lord, I wait for Thy salvation. Jesus saves sinners; He will save me also. Jesus receives sinners; He will receive me also. I am Jesus' own and remain His own. I lift up my eyes to heaven and behold Jesus summoning me to Him.

Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the Strength of my heart and my Portion forever.

Ps. 73, 25. 26.

When hence I must betake me, Lord, do not Thou depart! Oh, nevermore forsake me When death is at my heart! When soul and body languish, O leave me not alone, But take away mine anguish By virtue of Thine own.

O Jesus, my life is closing; take me to Thee. My Shepherd, receive Thy sheep; my Bridegroom, receive Thy bride; my Father, receive Thy child; my Jesus, take the soul that was purchased with Thy blood to Thee. This I pray, this I desire, and thus I close my eyes.

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. *Rev. 7. 9. 14.*

Oh, what the tribe, or what the glorious host, Comes sweeping swiftly down? The chosen ones on earth who wrought the most, The Church's brightest crown, Our Lord hath sent to meet me, As in the far-off years Their words oft came to greet me In yonder land of tears. The patriarchs' and prophets' noble train, With all Christ's followers true, Who bore the cross, and could the worst disdain That tyrants dared to do, I see them shine forever, All glorious as the sun, 'Mid light that fadeth never, Their perfect freedom won.

O my Jesus, I am waiting with joy for the white robe and the beautiful crown which Thou wilt give me. Meanwhile I wash my soul in Thy holy blood; I claim it for myself. Receive me into the eternal life of joy for the sake of Thy blood.

Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit. *Luke 23, 46.*
Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. *Acts 7, 59.*

Lead me from this dark vale beneath, And shorten then the pangs of death; All evil spirits drive away, But let Thy Spirit with me stay Until my soul the body leave, Then in Thy hands my soul receive, And let the earth the body keep Till the last day shall break its sleep.

O my Jesus, thus I, too, pray to Thee now. Thy last word on the cross shall be my last word in my life. Lord Jesus, I live unto Thee, I die unto Thee; whether I live or die, I am Thine. Would to God that I might meet my end like Jesus, committing my spirit into the hands and faithful keeping of the Father! O my Refuge, let Thy last word be my last word, and I shall leave this earth and go to the Father in the fulness of joy.

Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

2 Pet. 3, 13.

O Zion, hail! Bright city, now unfold The gates of grace to me! How many a time I longed for thee of old Ere yet I was set free From yon dark life of sadness, Yon world of shadowy naught, And God had giv'n the gladness, The heritage I sought.

O holy Triune God, receive my soul now into Thy heavenly realm of joy! O come, Lord Jesus; I am waiting for Thee; lead me to Thy joy! Lord God Father, what Thou hast created, Lord God Son, what Thou hast redeemed, Lord God Holy Spirit, what Thou hast sanctified, I commit into Thy hands. Praise and glory be to Thy holy name, now and forever! Amen.

Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me.

Rev. 22, 12.

There at my Savior's side Heav'n is my home; I shall be glorified, Heav'n is my home; There are the good and blest, Those I love most and best; And there I, too, shall rest — Heav'n is my home. Therefore I murmur not, Heav'n is my home; Whate'er my earthly lot, Heav'n is my home, And I shall surely stand There at my Lord's right hand; Heav'n is my fatherland, Heav'n is my home.

Sighings and Prayers of a Dying Person.

1.

When my last hour is close at hand.

O my Jesus, Thou that knowest best, perhaps my dying hour is close at hand; therefore, teach me that mine age is as nothing before Thee, and that I must go hence. Keep me in faith that I may trust in the Triune God in whom I have been baptized, and

place all my hope in Thy merit, blood, and wounds, O Jesus! Preserve me from temptation in my dying hour. Let Thy left hand be under my head, and Thy right hand embrace me. Refresh me in my last hour with the consolation of the Holy Spirit, and let me hear joy and gladness. Abide with me when my end comes.

And I must hence betake me.

O yes, my Jesus, I shall journey the way of death, but if Thou, O Jesus, art with me, I am not afraid. My death is my going to the Father. How I do rejoice that I am coming to my heavenly Father, to Thee, my Jesus, where I shall find peace, joy, consolation, bliss, light, a glorious dress, a beautiful crown! How happy shall I be there! There all my misery and affliction will be at an end, and I shall enter into rest, joy, and everlasting life. Be with me, O Jesus, on this way of death to eternal life; drive the enemies of my soul from me. Give me the boldness of faith and the sweetness of Thy consolation, that with joy I may happily begin and complete my journey through the valley of death.

Lord Jesus Christ, beside me stand.

O yes, Lord Jesus, accompany me from this temporal life into the life eternal. Though the way of death be gloomy, I shall nevertheless walk in light, if Thou, O Jesus, art my Light. Stand by me on my death-bed, and receive my soul when it quits the body. When I close my physical eyes in death, let the eyes of my soul behold Thee. Accompany my soul, till Thou hast brought me into Thy holy habitation, to the holy angels, and to the company of

the elect. Yea, accompany me as 'Thine own to the throne of Thy heavenly Father, in order that I may there obtain mercy and be received as an heir of salvation. Be at my side at my departure from the world.

Nor let Thy help forsake me.

Oh, nobody can help me in my dying hour but Thou alone, O Jesus! Help me, and strengthen my faith; help me, and witness unto my spirit that I am verily God's child, and as a child of God shall now receive the eternal inheritance. Yea, do not forsake me when I grow pale in death and the pallor of death begins to spread over me. Do not forsake me when my eyes grow dim; be and remain the light of my soul in that moment. Do not depart from me when I lose my hearing, but teach, comfort, and refresh me then inwardly in my soul. Do not forsake me when I lose my speech and can no longer pray. Do Thou, O Jesus, in that moment intercede for me, and Thou, O Holy Spirit, pray in me and make intercession with God for me with groanings which cannot be uttered. Do not forsake me when I am passing away, but lead me to the joy of heaven. Oh, receive

My soul at this my earthly end

into Thy merciful protection. O Jesus, Thou hast bought my soul with Thy holy blood; wash it and cleanse it that it may be found a clean vessel, pleasing to God. If the close of my natural life is now at hand, give me a rational end, if it be Thy will, that I may direct my heart, eyes, and mind to Thee, and pray as long as my tongue can stammer, sigh as long as there is still breath in me, yea, that I may

receive with joy and for my comfort the encouraging words of those standing about me. If it please Thee, grant me a cheerful end, that dying I may enjoy Thy fellowship, O Jesus, taste the sweetness of Thy indwelling, and be refreshed with the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Grant me a blessed end, that I may quietly and happily fall asleep in faith, and remain united with Thee before dying, while dying, and after dying. In order that this may be done, I resign my soul to Thee. My soul

To Thy blest hands I now commend.

Oh, how well shall it be cared for in Thy hands! Behold, I have commended my soul to Thee every day; therefore this shall be my last prayer: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. My Jesus, Thou hast redeemed my soul with Thy holy blood from sin and from the power of the devil; therefore I commend it to Thee. It is, and shall forever remain, Thine own. Receive it into the everlasting joy of Thy heaven, to bliss, to glory. There I shall be satisfied. Thy hands are mighty hands; no one can pluck me out of Thy hands: not the world, for it has no claim on me; not Satan, for Thou hast overcome him. Thy hands are faithful hands; in them my soul is well taken care of forever.

For Thou wilt safely keep it.

I entrust it to Thy keeping until the Last Day, when Thou wilt unite it again with my glorified body, and make soul and body enjoy the bliss of heaven. Meanwhile, Lord Jesus, gladden, comfort, and refresh my soul with Thy glory. Grant unto me eternal seeing after my believing here in this

life, peace after unrest, joy after suffering, consolation after anguish, refreshing after misery. Let my soul behold, amidst angels and the elect, Thy glory, which Thou hast prepared for Thy children.

2.

My sins, dear Lord, disturb me sore.

O yes, my Jesus, I think of my sins to-day; I think of them, and I am heartily sorry that throughout my life I have provoked Thee to anger such a long time, so often, and in so many ways, by thoughts, words, and deeds. I mourn in my inmost soul because I have offended my Creator, my Redeemer, and my Sanctifier. Oh, that I had not done so! If it were to be done again, I would never do it. But, O Jesus, with Thy innocent blood, that beautiful ruby flood, wash away all my sins; bind up my heart with the balm of Thy consolations. Remember my sins no more, but cast them into the depth of the sea. O my Jesus, when my sins gather about my sick-bed to frighten and accuse me, be Thou at my side and show me Thy holy wounds. Cancel with Thy holy blood the record of my sins, and seal in my heart the forgiveness of my sins with Thy Holy Spirit. This shall be my comfort when

My conscience cannot slumber.

I feel, indeed, what anguish and terror I must suffer on account of my sins. O sin, how bitter thou art to a person on his dying-bed! What fear and dread thou dost cause! But, my Jesus, I implore Thy mercy; graciously forgive unto me what I have done against Thee throughout my earthly life. O Jesus, for the sake of the blood which Thou

didst shed, forgive me all my trespasses. For the sake of Thy wounds have compassion on me. For the sake of Thy everlasting love receive me into Thy grace. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Thus my conscience will be at peace and my heart quieted. Oh, I do not deny my iniquities and sins; I confess before the all-knowing and holy God that there is a multitude of them.

Though they're as sands upon the shore.

If the sands upon the shore are many, my sins are still more. I have sinned much by thoughts; much have I sinned by my words and unprofitable talk; much have I sinned by my works and acts, from my youth up until this hour. Now, if Thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? If Thou shouldst bring the thoughts of my heart before Thy judgment, I shall be ashamed. If I am to render an account of every idle word, I am lost. If Thou wilt judge and reward me according to my works, how will I fare? What shall I sinner do? What shall I attempt? My conscience accuses me.

I quail not at their number.

And why should I despair? My heavenly Father surely will not cast out His poor, penitent child. I will not despair; for Jesus is my Savior, my Mediator, and Advocate with my Father in heaven. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God,

who also maketh intercession for us. I will not despair; the Holy Spirit will remain my support even in the anguish of death, and will bear witness to me that I am verily a child of God, that my sins shall be forgiven me for Jesus' sake, and that the mercy of God will enfold me in its arms. As often, therefore, as Satan, my sins, and my conscience terrify and smite me, Thou, O Jesus, shalt be the Refuge of my soul and my Consolation.

I call to mind that Thou hast died.

When dying, I shall place Thee before me as Thou didst die for me on the cross, and didst shed Thy blood, and will say: Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world! O Lamb of God most holy, Upon the cursed tree slain, E'er patient, meek, and lowly, Though heaped with hate and disdain. All sins Thou borest for us, Else had despair reigned o'er us. Have mercy on me, O Jesus. Thy death brings me life; because Thou didst die for me, I shall not die the death everlasting nor be condemned, but shall have life through Thee. God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Thus in my heart there shall ever abide the remembrance of the bitter suffering of Jesus and of the blood which He shed. Yea,

Lord Jesus, and Thy riven side —

let it be graven upon my heart. Thy wounds were inflicted on Thee for my sake also, and I will take refuge in them. As a little bird, at the approach of a storm, when gusts of wind frighten men and beasts, snugly hides in hollow trees, so, Lord Jesus,

the cavern of Thy riven side is my refuge, to which I hasten when sin and death terrify me. In Thy holy wounds I hide, and will live and die happily in them. My soul is well sheltered in them. Since water and blood flowed from Thy holy wounds, my cleansing from sin and my reconciliation with God is assured. The blood, wounds, and death of Jesus shall be my last thoughts, and Jesus, Jesus, Jesus shall be my last word. O Jesus Christ, Son of God, who hast done so much for me, hide me in Thy wounds. Thou art my only Consolation and Helper. Yea, Lord Jesus, Thy wounds

Shall rescue and preserve me.

For their sake I obtain grace with God, righteousness, and everlasting salvation. While my body is shut up in the coffin, I shall shut up my soul in the wounds of Jesus. There it will be kept safely: Satan will not be able to carry it off; no enemy shall drive it from its shelter. In these wounds my soul shall rest and be brought into the assembly of the saints.

3.

I have been grafted in the Vine.

Oh, what a great comfort it is in the hour of my death to know that I am a member in Thy holy body! In Holy Baptism I have been reborn and regenerated, and made a member of the Christian Church, whose Head is Jesus. But if Jesus is my Head, and I am His member, I know that I shall be where Jesus is. Now, Jesus is in glory; thither I, too, shall go. Could the Head leave His member without drawing it after Him? Yes, my Jesus will draw me after Him into His everlasting kingdom

of joy. He has promised: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." O Jesus, Thou hast been exalted to the right hand of Thy heavenly Father; draw me after Thee; bring me to the everlasting joy of heaven. O yes, Thou wilt make me, Thy child, share Thy glory.

And hence I comfort borrow.

A glorious comfort! When the head wears the crown, all the members rejoice. Since my Jesus is crowned with glory and honor, I, too, shall obtain the victory after the battle, a glorious dress, and a beautiful crown from the hand of the Lord. That is a sure comfort; for since I am God's child, I am an heir, yea, God's heir and a coheir with Christ. I shall obtain heavenly treasures and be exalted to glory. This being so, should I not die gladly, should I not gladly suffer and endure, in order that I may live and reign with Him? This also shall be my abiding comfort. Jesus, my Head, will glorify me, His member. Jesus, my Savior, will give me everlasting life. Therefore, I say: My Jesus,

Yes, Thou wilt surely keep me Thine.

Though in this life a head may be severed from its body, still nobody can separate me from Jesus. I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Yea, nothing, nothing shall separate me from Jesus: no cross and sickness, for I shall firmly endure it; no struggle and agony of my soul, for Jesus will be at my side and help me to overcome; yea, not even death, for death shall only serve to open the

door for me, that I may go in and be with Jesus. I wish to remain united with Jesus in life, in suffering, and death. My body and soul may be separated, but Jesus and my soul shall never be separated. I shall have to part with the world and my friends, but never with Jesus. O Jesus, I have ever enclosed Thee in my heart, and there I will hold Thee fast in true faith, until Thou wilt bring me to Thy heavenly glory. Jesus is mine, and I am at all times Jesus' own, even

In fear and pain and sorrow.

Though the anguish of death is a great sorrow, it is no sorrow to me, because Jesus is with me. Or wouldst Thou, my Jesus, depart from me in this anguish? O Thou faithful Friend of my soul, that Thou wilt never do. Thou hast promised me: "I will be with thee in trouble"; fulfil, then, this gracious promise to me. If the agony of death is the last sorrow, Thou, my Savior, wilt sweeten it to me with Thy presence. Be Thou my Consolation and Shield when I must die; remind me of Thy Passion when my last hour draws nigh. My eyes shall then behold Thee, upon Thy cross shall dwell, my heart by faith enfold Thee, and say: Lord Jesus, I leave Thee not, except Thou bless me. Lord Jesus, to Thee I live; Lord Jesus, to Thee I die; Lord Jesus, Thine I am dead and living. Who dies thus dies well.

For though I die, I die to Thee.

Yes, my Jesus, I will gladly die because I know that I shall come to Thee, into Thy glory. I will die in faith, and trust in Thy merit, blood, and death. I die glad and happy, for I die to Thee, longing for Thee. I die as Thy child whom Thou hast

guided hitherto. I die as Thy sheep, which no one shall pluck out of Thy hand. I die as Thy heir, for whom the joy and bliss of heaven has been prepared. For

Eternal life Thou hast for me

prepared yonder. In heaven, with Thee, in joy everlasting, there will be no more sorrow and woe, no sickness and pain, no suffering and death, but gladness, consolation, peace, rest, sweetness, light, and glory. And this life in glory shall endure forever; it shall never end. O Jesus, with what joy I look for this life, for this glory! My pleasant days here have been few, and toil and sorrow has been my daily bread; in heaven all my days shall be pleasant, days of joy, days of refreshing. There sorrow and weeping shall have ceased forever. There my Savior will wipe away all tears from my eyes. O happy hour when I shall reach that joy! And that I shall reach it I know for a certainty; for this life of joy Thou hast

Won for me with Thy dying.

O Lamb of God, Thou didst die for me; Thou art the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. For my sake Thou wast mocked, crucified, and slain. Thy death has sweetened my dying. It has all been for my benefit. Yea, Thy deep humiliation tendeth to my exaltation. Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, dearest Jesus, unto Thee! Thou didst die for me: by Thy death I have been reconciled with God, and obtained peace, the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and the salvation of my soul. Because Thou livest, I shall also live. Oh, therefore, be not afraid, my soul; look up to heaven with

joy. Jesus has gained heaven for Thee, and has there prepared a place for thee. He says: "I go to prepare a place for you." What if I have here no continuing city? When my heart breaks, when my body and soul are separated, I know whither to go: to Jesus, to Jesus, my Savior. For I know that if this earthly house of my tabernacle be dissolved by death, I have a building of God, a house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And this building my Jesus has acquired for me by His suffering and dying.

4.

Since Thou from death didst rise again,

I receive from God's Word this glorious comfort: Though I die, I shall rise again. Though my body shall be placed in the grave, cold and lifeless; though it shall turn to dust and ashes, it shall not remain in the grave, but shine like the sun in the kingdom of the Father; it shall be transformed, glorified, and arrayed in white garments. Is not this a great comfort? And this comfort grows out of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. He died for me on the tree of the cross, as the innocent Lamb of God, and He was buried; but He rose again victoriously on the third day. Jesus is risen; I, too, shall rise. Jesus lives, I shall also live. O joy! O comfort! Though I die, and my body is placed in the earth, I shall come forth again, clothed with immortality and glory. Jesus did not remain in the grave; therefore,

In death He will not leave me.

Jesus will restore my life, and also my members, my body and soul, which were separated by death, shall be reunited in the resurrection of life. Bury

my body in the grave, then, without anxious concern; for I shall not remain there. The grave is but my chamber of rest, where I shall sleep quietly till Jesus will wake me. It is my bed of repose where I shall obtain rest after so much waking, such severe suffering, pains, and affliction. In my grave Jesus will cover me with the wings of His mercy; He will guard my bones until He will unite them again and restore to me the light of my eyes, my head, hands, and all my members. As little as the grave could hold Jesus, so little will it hold me when the trumpet's sound is heard, and the deep, cold grave is stirred. Thus I suffer no harm in the grave, since my body rests there from all care, from all toil, from all pain, and my soul is refreshed and comforted by God in heavenly joy. Yes, my Savior, not only Thy victorious resurrection gladdens me, but also,

Lord, Thy ascension soothes my pain.

When Jesus had risen from the dead, He ascended to heaven and entered into His glory. Behold, my Jesus is gone before; I follow after; I, too, shall have a glorious ascension. My soul shall be with God immediately after its departure from this life, and in the blessed and glad resurrection of the dead we shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord; and then soul and body shall enter together into the joy of their Lord. O my Jesus, remind me of this glorious ascension again and again, that I may comfort myself with it in the hour of death. Remind me that I cannot go to heaven until after I have laid aside this mortal body, and have been unclothed. This, now, shall remain my greatest and most delightful comfort when I die: Jesus lives,

and I shall also live; Jesus ascended to heaven, and I shall share His ascension when I enter heaven. Could there be anything sweeter and more delightful to me than the ascension of Jesus and my own future ascension? It drives the fear of death from me.

No fear-of death shall grieve me.

I know that I shall die, but I am not afraid; for my soul quits its frail, earthly tabernacle and enters into eternal glory. Is a child afraid to go to his father, or a bride to her bridegroom? By death I come to my heavenly Father, to Jesus, the Bridegroom of my soul; why, then, should I be afraid? I enter into glory, into eternal light, eternal joy; I obtain the crown and the white robe. That does not make me fearful, but fills me with comfort and joy. I do not die, it is only my misery that dies. My soul drops its cross and receives the heavenly treasures; it quits men and joins the holy angels and the elect. Yes, my Jesus, there is another thought, still more powerful to drive away the fear of death; that is my most holy union with Thee.

For Thou wilt have me where Thou art.

Oh, what a comfort that is! After my happy departure from this life I shall ascend to heaven, and be with my Jesus in His glory: the sheep is to be with the Shepherd, the disciple with the Master, the servant with the Lord. That is another thing that He has promised, saying: "Where I am, there shall also My servant be." Oh, what joy that will be when Jesus will clasp me in His arms and lead me to glory! O my Savior, when is this hour of blissful union and home-coming to arrive? Thou

hast not only acquired salvation for my soul; Thou hast not only gone before to prepare a place for me, but Thou wilt also receive me unto Thyself, as Thou hast promised to all Thy children: "I will receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." Oh, then, it is well with me if I am where Jesus is, and this serves for my comfort.

To be with Thee, and ne'er to part.

He will receive me unto Himself, to the end that I may live with Him in everlasting joy. I am now to inherit the mansion of my heavenly Father, and to share all heavenly treasures. My pilgrimage is at an end, and I have reached home. Yea, no separation shall ever follow this union. I shall stand before His throne and behold His face, and derive joy unspeakable from this vision. I shall live with Him and be refreshed by Him forever and ever. And since I am sure of this,

Therefore, I die rejoicing.

Why should I not die rejoicing? In peace and joy I now depart At God's disposing; For full of comfort is my heart, Soft reposing; So the Lord has promised me, And death is but a slumber. I die rejoicing because my sins are forgiven for the sake of Jesus' blood and death. I die rejoicing because I shall be raised again from the grave to everlasting life. I die rejoicing because I shall have a blessed ascension, and shall come to my Jesus. Therefore, from hence I go with gladness To Christ my Brother's side, That I may soon be with Him, And e'er with Him abide. I go hence rejoicing, out of the world into heaven, from the vale of tears to the

home of joy. For out of tribulation and great sorrow I shall enter into a joy which no ear has heard, and which shall endure forever.

5.

Thus I go hence to Jesus Christ.

Since my Savior says: "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God," I, too, say when dying: I ascend; I ascend to my heavenly Father, to my Jesus, to the Holy Spirit, and thus to the Triune God; to my Immanuel, to the Lover of my soul, to my Brother; yea, my redeemed soul ascends to its Redeemer. I go to my Savior, who will lead me into heaven, and receive me into favor as a soul cleansed with His blood. Oh, how I long to behold Jesus in His glory; to embrace Jesus whom I have never seen and yet love!

My arms to Him extending.

I extend my arms to my Jesus, to clasp Him to my heart, to hold Him, and never to let Him go. I embrace Jesus now by faith; I hold Him, and do not let Him go, until He shall lead me into His Father's house, to everlasting life. I extend my arms and cry, Yes, come, Lord Jesus! I now call to mind that my Jesus extended both His arms on the tree of the cross and died thus, as if He wished to embrace me. So I will also die with arms extended, to embrace Jesus. O Bridegroom of my soul, embrace me and present me transformed and glorified to Thy Father. What a blessed entrance that will be when I enter heaven accompanied and conducted by Jesus! Upon these thoughts I will dwell and thus fall asleep in Jesus.

Thus quietly I start that sleep,

resting gently, because I rest in the arms of Jesus. With Jesus in my heart, with Jesus in my mind, I fall asleep in God's name. O Jesus, let my death become a sweet and gentle sleep that I may quietly and peacefully breathe my last in faith and in Thy love. Also let my body sleep gently in the cool earth until the Last Day. While my body is sleeping, my soul, too, rests in everlasting joy and bliss. What a sweet rest, a rest that no one can disturb! I rest from my cross; I rest from my misery, from sorrow and grief; I rest from all pains. Oh, blessed, heavenly, glorious rest! If the child sleeps gently in its mother's arms, why should not I sleep gently and rest in the arms of my Jesus? For I am sleeping the sleep

Which no man will be ending.

To raise the dead is a work of God; no man, therefore, has of himself the power to raise the dead. But Thou, my Jesus, art true God, and canst call the dead from their graves. Thy voice shall resound through the earth and penetrate the graves, and the dead shall arise. O Jesus, raise my body then to everlasting life on the glad day of Thy coming, in order that this body which served Thee here may also be glorified. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another. What no man can do my Savior will do.

But Jesus, God's Son glorified.

Before I die, then, I once more confess my faith in Jesus. He is Jesus, the Redeemer and Savior of men. He is also Christ, the promised Messiah; yea, He is not only true man, but also the Son of God, yea, God Himself. Trusting in this Jesus Christ I wish to die now, glad and happy. The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanses me from all sin. Yea, Jesus

The gates of heaven will open wide.

O my Jesus, when the door of this life closes after me, open to me the door of heaven. During my life I have diligently meditated upon heaven; I have also sought to attain heaven by faith, in holiness of living. Therefore, O Jesus, open wide to me the door of heaven when I close my pilgrimage. O Jesus, open to me the door of heaven and say: "Thou good and faithful soul, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Come, thou blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for thee from the foundation of the world." Oh, how happy I shall be when with such a sweet welcome Thou wilt

Lead me to life eternal!

As a bridegroom leads his bride to the marriage, so, O Jesus, lead me into everlasting life, into the life that never ends, into the glory which Thou hast gained for me, into the joy which shall endure forever; then I die gladly. Now I am with Jesus; He is with me. I have been transferred from this miserable life on earth to the life of joy in heaven. Now I have passed from believing to seeing. I shall

behold face to face the God whom I love; of this I have no doubt. I shall see Him in the everlasting joy and glory which have been prepared for me. To Thee be praise and glory forevermore!

Those Present Call to the Dying.

Remember Jesus Christ, remember His bitter suffering and death. Comfort yourself with the love of the Father in heaven, who has received you as His child in Holy Baptism, and is now about to receive you as His child into everlasting glory. Comfort yourself with the bleeding wounds of Jesus Christ which He suffered to be inflicted on Him on account of your sins. Comfort yourself with His holy blood which He shed for your sins. Comfort yourself with the support of the Holy Spirit who has sanctified you. Trusting in this Triune God, live and die in peace. Amen.

Benediction Pronounced over a Dying Person.

Depart, O soul, dearly bought by Jesus Christ. Depart to thy God and Father in Jesus Christ, who has created and loved thee, whom thou hast feared, and in whom thou hast trusted as a child. Depart to the Lord Jesus, thy dearest and most faithful Shepherd and Redeemer, who has bought thee for His sheep with His blood, and to whom thou hast clung by faith. Depart to the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, who has sanctified thee and chosen thee for His temple and abode. Depart out of vanity into eternity. Depart into the heavenly fatherland now that thy pilgrimage is ended. Depart out of sorrow into joy. Depart out of all trouble to the living God. May He bless thy going out and thy coming in, and preserve thee by His power unto salvation. Depart and enter into the Kingdom prepared for thee from the foundation of the world. The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace. Amen.

Prayer of Those Present after the Dying Person has Breathed His Last.

O holy and righteous God, it has pleased Thee to call hence the departed here lying before us by temporal death. Let us learn from this death that we, too, must die and leave this world, in order that we may prepare for it in time by repentance, a living faith, and the avoidance of the vanities and sins of the world. Refresh the soul that has now departed with heavenly consolation and joy, and fulfil unto it all the gracious promises which in Thy holy Word Thou hast made to those who believe in Thee. Grant to the body a soft and quiet rest in the earth till the Last Day, when Thou wilt reunite body and soul and lead them into glory, so that the entire person that served Thee here may be filled with heavenly joy yonder. Comfort all who are in grief over this death, and be and remain to the bereaved their Father, Provider, Guardian, Helper, and Support. Do not forsake them, and do not withdraw Thy hand from them, but let them abundantly experience Thy goodness, grace, love, and help, until Thou shalt grant them also a happy and blessed end. Hear us for Thy mercy's sake. Amen.

BOOK V.

Prayers for Special Occasions.

The Believing Christian Praises God on the Return of His Birthday.

EXHORTATION.

What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? Ps. 116, 12.

The return of the day when we first beheld the light of this world, our birthday, ought to be a day of praise and thanksgiving which we ought to spend singing and praying, and with devotional exercises in thought and act. We should, in particular, reflect upon the many and great favors which we have received from the hand of our faithful God throughout our lives to the present moment; for He has carried us in His arms in childhood, in youth, to the present hour. Unbelievers do not consider these things. True, they remember the day, and celebrate it, but in what manner? Only with banqueting, dancing, and frolicking. A day thus spent does not deserve to be called a day of praise and thanksgiving, and a day pleasing to God.

When the children of God live to see their birthday year after year, they praise the faithfulness and goodness of God, (1) because He had them be born of Christian parents, who brought them to the knowledge of salvation in Jesus Christ; (2) because He has given them a healthy body and sound mind, which is a great blessing of God, though hardly ever acknowledged so by men; (3) because He has guarded them against misfortune, rescued them from dangers, and hitherto preserved them.

At the same time, (4) they humbly ask for forgiveness of their sins, and promise God that they will spend the remaining days of their life in childlike obedience and godliness. (5) They

also comfort themselves with the thought that if they continue thus in faith and love, God will continue to spread the wings of His mercy over them. (6) Finally, they reflect that the celebration of their birthday in which they have engaged may have been their last celebration on earth:

PRAYER.

Eternal, gracious, and merciful God, by Thy favor I have again lived to see my birthday, the day on which Thou didst usher me into the light of day, to receive me later by Holy Baptism as Thy child. By the former favor I was made a human being and Thy creature, by the latter I became Thy child and heir. Therefore this day shall be a day of praise, prayer, and thanksgiving to me.

Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. Should I not praise and magnify Thee, my God, because Thou hast let me be born not only with sound limbs and a well-formed body, which is a great favor, but also from Christian parents, who from my youth have trained me in Thy knowledge, O Triune God? If Thou hadst let me be born of Jews, Turks, or heathen parents, I should probably be as blind and hardened as they. But now I know and love Thee, and have life and the salvation of my soul in Thee.

Having been nurtured in Thy arms, I have been guided and accompanied by Thee in the years which followed. Thou hast given me food and clothing, and hast graciously preserved me until this day. O my God, I am not worthy of the least of all the

mercies and of all the truth which Thou hast shown me. Come and hear; I will declare what the Lord has done for my body and my soul. But, alas! I cannot recount all: one might sooner number the stars in the firmament than the gracious gifts which I have received from Thee, O Lord. From how many dangers hast Thou delivered me! How many calamities hast Thou warded off from me! Thy Spirit has taught, governed, guided me, and when I was inclined to sin, has inwardly warned and restrained me.

O my God, while my years increase and Thy favors also become numerous, I am reminded to-day of the sins which I have committed throughout my life. Forgive them unto me for Jesus' sake; blot them out with His holy blood, and let me obtain mercy for His sake. Grant me grace to spend the remaining days of my life, which are written in Thy book, in the true fear of Thee and in sincere piety, that all my doings and my whole life may be pleasing to Thee. And since I do not know what shall be the number of my days on earth, while I am certain that Thou hast fixed bounds for me which I cannot pass, keep me from shortening my own life by anger, intemperance, sins, wrecklessness, and crimes. Let me reach the limit of life appointed for me in health, with Thy blessing and protection, until for this earthly and transitory life Thou wilt give me eternal and heavenly life for the sake of Jesus Christ. Till then I shall celebrate this day, as often as it recurs, with praise and thanksgiving, and shall now sing:

My soul, now bless thy Maker! Let all within me bless His name, Who maketh thee partaker Of mercies more than thou dar'st

claim! Forget Him not, whose meekness Forgiveth all thy sin;
Who healeth all thy weakness, Renews thy life within; Whose grace
and care are endless, And saved thee through the past; Who leaves
no suff'rer friendless, But rights the wronged at last. Amen.

HYMN.

O that I had a thousand voices!
A mouth to speak with thousand tongues!
My heart, which in the Lord rejoices,
Then would proclaim in grateful songs
To all, wherever I might be,
What great things God hath done for me.

O that my voice might high be sounding,
Far as the widely distant poles,
My blood run quick with rapture bounding,
Long as its vital current rolls,
And every pulse thanksgiving raise,
And every breath a hymn of praise!

O all ye powers that God implanted,
Arise, keep silence thus no more,
Put forth the strength that He hath granted,
Your noblest work is to adore;
My soul and body, make ye meet
With heartfelt praise your Lord to greet!

Ye forest leaves so green and tender,
That dance for joy in summer air;
Ye meadow grasses bright and slender,
Ye flowers so wondrous sweet and fair;
Ye live to show His praise alone,
Help me to make His glory known!

O all things that have breath and motion
That throng with life, earth, sea, and sky,
Now join me in my heart's devotion,
Help me to raise His praises high;
My utmost powers can ne'er aright
Declare the wonders of His might.

Dear Father, endless praise I render
For soul and body strangely joined;
I praise Thee, Guardian kind and tender,
For all the noble joys I find
So richly spread on every side,
And freely for my use supplied.

What equal praises can I offer,
Dear Jesus, for Thy mercy shown?
What pangs, my Savior, didst Thou suffer,
And thus for all my sins atone!
Thy death alone my soul could free
From Satan, to be blest with Thee.

Honor and praise, still onward reaching,
Be Thine, too, Spirit of all grace,
Whose holy power and faithful teaching
Give me among Thy saints a place:
Whate'er of good in me may shine
Comes only from Thy light divine.

Who grants abundant gifts to bless me?
Who but Thyself, O God of love?
Who guards my ways lest fears oppress me?
'Tis Thou, Lord God of hosts, above!
And when my sins Thy wrath provoke,
Thy patience, Lord, forbears the stroke.

I kiss the rod, too, unrepining,
When God His chastening makes me feel,
My graces call for His refining,
The trial works no lasting ill;
It purifies and makes it known
That He regards me as a son.

In life I often have discovered,
With gratitude and glad surprise,
When clouds of sorrow o'er me hovered,
God sent from them my best supplies;
In troubles He is ever near,
And shows me all a Father's care.

Why not, then, with a faith unbounded
Forever in His love confide?

Why not, with earthly griefs surrounded,
Rejoicing still in hope abide,
Until I reach that blissful home
Where doubt and sorrow never come?

No more low vanities regarding,
To Thee, in whom I find my rest,
I cry, my inmost soul according,
"My God, Thou art the highest, best;
Strength, honor, praise, and thanks, and power
Be Thine both now and evermore!"

Lord, I will tell, while I am living
Thy goodness forth with every breath,
And greet each morning with thanksgiving
Until my heart is still in death;
Yea, when at last my lips grow cold,
Thy praise shall in my sighs be told.

O Father, deign Thou, I beseech Thee,
To listen to my earthly lays;
A nobler strain in heav'n shall reach Thee,
When I with angels hymn Thy praise,
And learn amid their choirs to sing
Loud hallelujahs to my King.

The Devout Christian Thanks God for the Harvest That has been Gathered.

EXHORTATION.

For she did not know that I gave her corn and wine and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold which they prepared for Baal. Therefore will I return and take away My corn in the time thereof, and My wine in the season thereof, and will recover My wool and My flax given to cover her nakedness. *Hos. 2, 8. 9.*

If we were to look for a glorious and great blessing apparent to all men, we should undoubtedly find it in our annual harvests. For it is God who has protected our sowings in the earth during the winter, caused them to sprout, grow, and bear fruit during the

summer, averted hail, tempests, and storms, and filled our barns and cellars with His blessings. On the other hand, if there is a favor that seems trifling and contemptible to the world, and for which God is thanked least, it is the annual harvest. For ungrateful mankind imagines that these things simply had to come to pass, that according to the laws of nature everything had to grow, and that God has had nothing to do with it. Accordingly, God's anger is aroused, and by His just judgment He often causes the crops to fail, in order that everybody may see that the ground cannot produce anything without the Lord's will, and that without His blessing nothing can grow.

A believing Christian views this matter differently. When at harvest-time he beholds the full ears of grain and the vines loaded with clusters of grapes, he (1) lifts his eyes to heaven, and for the blessings which he has received he praises the almighty Creator, Giver, and Preserver, who has produced so many grains from one seed and such luscious fruit from a mean-looking wood. (2) He praises God's preserving providence, which provided throughout the year the early and the latter rain in due season, graciously averted thunderstorms, drought, hail, and floods, and guarded the crops. And when the time has arrived that he sees the grain fall at the stroke of the sharp sickle, when he sees it hauled into the barns, when he sees the grapes crushed in the wine-press, (3) his heart is stirred, and he receives all these gifts with grateful hands. (4) He also makes use of them and enjoys them with thanksgiving. He knows that it is God who feeds him, provides for him, and keeps him.

Yea, (5) he lets God's goodness lead him to repentance. If we thank a benefactor who gives us a garment or something for our support, and are careful not to offend him, why should we not praise the greatest Benefactor who gives us all things?

PRAYER.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever. Thus I say, O my God, now that I live to see again the blessed time of harvest. O gracious God, how great is the goodness Thou hast manifested toward us! Thou hast laid the foundations of the earth that it should be estab-

lished forever. But into this earth Thou hast placed Thy glorious treasures; it is made to produce fruits for us in abundance, which serve for sustaining our life, for our food and health.

O living Father, Thou hast especially crowned this year with Thy blessing, and Thy paths drop fatness. Thou hast watered the hills from Thy chambers; Thou hast filled the earth with fruits which Thou hast created. Thou hast caused the grass to grow for the cattle and herb for the service of man, that Thou mightest bring forth food from the earth. O faithful Father, this year again Thou hast given food and drink to Thy children, although they have been ungrateful; Thou hast protected our harvest. Heaven has heard the cry of the earth, and the earth has yielded corn and wine. Thou hast given us the early and the latter rain in due season, causing our fields to bloom and giving us the bounties which sprang from them by Thy power. By Thy grace our trees have yielded many kinds of beautiful and pleasant fruits, and the wine has made us glad. O loving God and Father, Thou hast spread the wings of Thy mercy over all our lands: Thou hast caused the sun to shine in season, thus maturing all our crops; Thou hast protected them from hail, blight, drought, and floods. While we slept, Thou didst wake; Thou wast the Watchman and Keeper of our fields.

O Lord, how great and manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all, and the earth is full of Thy riches. All creatures, man and beasts, wait upon Thee, that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That Thou givest them they gather; Thou openest Thine hand, and they are

filled with good. Yes, Thou hast abundantly blessed us this year, O God, with a wealth of Thy bounties.

For this we thank Thee with our inmost heart. O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker. Let us enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise. Let us say with grateful hearts: The Lord hath done great things for us; yea, the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.

O Lord, Lord, let us not misuse the gifts and favors which Thou hast bestowed upon us, but let us learn from them Thy love towards us and Thy fatherly faithfulness. O God, if some who are ungrateful should show contempt for Thy gifts by using them for gluttony or refusing to thank Thee for them, do not on that account withdraw Thy blessing from us, but preserve them for us according to Thy mercy.

O Father, who hast loved us with an everlasting love, and who art drawing us to Thee also by these earthly blessings, that we may know the Giver by the gifts and the Benefactor by His glorious presents, grant that Thy goodness may lead us to repentance. Whenever we see Thy gifts before us on the table, or receive them into our hands or mouth, let us always lift our eyes to Thee, O Thou Fountain of every blessing! And as Thou sustainest our bodies by these bounties, let us through the means of grace which Thou hast appointed increase also in the inner man, in faith, love, and godliness, that we may grow in all goodness, and be changed from glory to glory, until we shall be ushered into the enjoyment of the heavenly blessings in everlasting life through Jesus Christ.

O Lord, whose bounteous hand again Hath poured Thy gifts in plenty down, Who all creation dost sustain And all the earth with goodness crown: Lord of the harvest, here we own Our joy Thy gift, and Thine alone. Oh, may we ne'er with thankless heart Forget from whom our blessings flow! Still, Lord, Thy heavenly grace impart, Still teach us what to Thee we owe. Lord, may our lives with fruit divine Return Thy care, and prove us Thine. Lord, grant that each may sow to Thee; Grant us in endless life to reap. Of every heart the Guardian be: By day and night Thy servants keep, That all to Thee may joy afford On Thy great harvest-day, O Lord. Amen.

A HYMN OF HARVEST.

Now to Thee, gracious Lord of the seasons,
Be honor and glory and praise
That again in the joy of the harvest
Our jubilant anthem we raise.

Though many the fears that beset us,
Though faith waxes feeble and cold,
Thy bow, with its promise unbroken,
Glitters still as it glittered of old.

Though weary we grow in our watching
The weeks of the drought as they pass,
When the earth is as iron beneath us,
And the heavens above us as brass.

Yet the showers come back in their season;
Once more in the land there is seen
The brook brimming over with crystal,
The grass as the emerald green.

Though troubled the spirit within us,
When the mist upon valley and plain
Lies thick, and the clouds in their armies,
Return again after the rain.

Yet the sun cometh forth as a giant,
And after the tempest, the morn
Is cloudless and fair, and the color
Grows golden and rich on the corn.

For seed-time and harvest we thank Thee.
Our fears as the shadows have fled;
Thou hast given his seed to the sower,
Thou hast given the eater his bread.

OUR FATHER'S CARE.

The fields are reaped, the fruits are stored,
The air is crisp and keen,
And plenty heaps the humblest board,
Our rolling seas between.
There's joy for old and young to-day,
And comfort everywhere,
For all along the pilgrim way
We're in our Father's care.

Our Father sent the sun and rain,
And made the strong winds blow
On lifted hill and level plain
And in the valley low.
Our Father heard His children call,
And listened to their prayer,
And safe from ill were one and all
In that dear Father's care.

Perhaps we miss some silver notes
From out our household song;
But sweet and full the echo floats
From where the ransomed throng.
Perhaps an angel crossed the sill
And left a shadow there,
But that was by our Father's will
And of our Father's care.

For if the fields of earth are green,
So are the fields above,
Where evermore the tranquil scene
Is bathed in heavenly love.
Not closer is that blessed life
Than ours, for here or there,
In that full peace, in this our strife,
We're in our Father's care.

So fear not, fear not, little flock,
 To whom is always given,
 Sure-founded on the age-long Rock,
 The matchless peace of heaven.
 Lift up your eyes, be glad, be strong,
 The whole wide sky is fair,
 And evermore be this your song,
 "We're in our Father's care."

The Believing Christian Prays during a Thunderstorm.

EXHORTATION.

He made darkness His secret place; His pavilion round about Him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness that was before Him His thick clouds passed, hailstones, and coals of fire. The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave His voice, hailstones and coals of fire. Ps. 18, 11—13.

Among the external things by which ungodly children of this world, as a rule, are terrified and incited to pray, are thunderstorms. When God causes a severe tempest to arise with thunder and lightning, the lips of blasphemers at once begin to pray, not from love of God, — for why did they not pray before? — but from fear of God's punishment.

Believing Christians know, indeed, (1) that thunder and lightning are produced by natural causes; but they also know (2) that they carry out the commands of God. Just as God can arm any other creature against man, He can easily frighten men and beasts also by thunder, and set houses, villages, and towns on fire with His lightning. Accordingly, (3) godly Christians should refrain from those hideous curse-words in which thunder and lightning are invoked. They should (4) not grow timid at the approach of a thunderstorm, become terrified, and ready to despair from fright; for that is a sign that they have little confidence in God. But (5) they should remember that God keeps thunder and lightning in His hands, and is well able to protect them, even if they should be out in the field and under the open sky.

(6) However, in that case they should turn to God in prayer the more fervently, and recognize in the storm that they are noth-

ing, and God is all, that God is a mighty God, while we human beings are but poor worms, dust, and ashes, which God could destroy with one nod or stroke. (7) Accordingly, they should stand awed and reverent before the majesty of God, not only when it thunders, but also when the sun is shining, and should be careful not to offend Him by words or deeds. Especially, however, should they live in such a manner as to be assured at all times of God's favor, even if He should take us out of this world in a thunderstorm.

PRAYER.

O Thou strong and almighty God, I hear Thy voice in the clouds; I see Thy lightnings flash, and listen to the roar and noise of Thy thunder. Strong is Thine arm and great Thy might; if Thou choosest, Thou canst in the twinkling of an eye dash me and all men, together with all creatures, to the ground. But, O Lord, Lord, remember Thy tender mercies and Thy loving-kindness; for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth nor my transgressions; according to Thy mercy remember Thou me for Thy goodness' sake. Rebuke me not in Thine anger, neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure.

With sincere humility of heart I acknowledge that I have abundantly deserved to be destroyed and dashed to pieces by Thee in Thy just wrath. But, O Thou long-suffering God, spare me in this thunderstorm. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. I repent, and am heartily sorry that I have hitherto offended Thee so often, and with my thoughts, words, and deeds have provoked Thee to anger. But I pray for mercy and the forgiveness of all my sins and transgressions.

Consider, O heavenly Father, that I am Thy creature and also Thy child. Whither shall children go in their troubles and anxieties but to their father? Therefore I come to Thee, O my Father, and pray Thee: Be merciful to me, Thy child! O Father, protect me, shelter me, guard me. My refuge is under the shadow of Thy wings; hide me in Thy pavilion, place an angel-guard around me, that no calamity may touch me, no lightning harm me, no bolt strike me. O Lord Jesus, Thou Son of God, my only Mediator, Advocate, and Savior, be not far from me; for trouble is near. Make haste to deliver me; be my strong Defense. Leave me not, and do not withdraw Thy hand from me, O God of my salvation. Behold, I am forsaken by all creatures and men, but, oh, do not Thou forsake me; have compassion on me and save me. I cling to Thee, O Jesus; I hide myself in Thy holy wounds, and cry with the disciples: Lord, save us, we perish! O precious Holy Spirit, stir up my heart to prayer and devotion, that I may be roused by this thunderstorm and become godly. Henceforth when Thy holy Word is knocking at my door, help me to heed the call, so that I may repent, become converted, and cease from all sins, in order that I may thereafter become a willing listener, and not conform to the world in its sinful speech, manners, and habits.

O Holy Trinity, have mercy upon me and all godly Christians; shelter with Thy almighty hand my body and my life, my house and home; preserve the fruits of the field; do not let the lightning set my house on fire, nor Thy thunderbolts strike me. Be my Helper in trouble; for vain is the help of

man. O mighty Defender of Thy children, look upon me, and let me dwell safely beneath Thy sheltering protection. At the noise of Thy thundering the mountains shake, and the earth trembles; must not a poor worm like me, then, quake before Thee? Let me now recognize that the world is perishable, that all that we see will be consumed by fire, in order that I may not become enticed with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, and thus incite Thee to anger. O Lord, preserve me from sudden and evil death; let this thunderstorm pass by without harm. O Lord, who is like unto Thee, so majestic, almighty, and awe-inspiring, and yet so merciful and gracious, startling us and at the same time sheltering us? O spare me, and let me also this time find mercy and deliverance. Lord God, Father in heaven, have mercy upon us! Lord God Son, the Savior of the world, have mercy upon us! Be gracious unto us, and spare us, good Lord! Be gracious unto us and help us, good Lord! From all calamity by fire and water, good Lord, deliver us! From sudden and evil death, good Lord, deliver us!

God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform; He plants His footsteps in the sea, And rides upon the storm. Deep in unfathomable mines Of never-failing skill He treasures up His bright designs, And works His sovereign will. Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take; The clouds ye so much dread Are big with mercy, and shall break In blessings on your head. Amen.

HYMN.

When in the hour of utmost need
We know not where to look for aid;
When days and nights of anxious thought
Nor help nor counsel yet have brought,—

Then this our comfort is alone,
That we may meet before Thy throne,
And cry, O faithful God, to Thee
For rescue from our misery;

To Thee may raise our hearts and eyes,
Repenting sore with bitter sighs,
And seek Thy pardon for our sin
And respite from our griefs within.

For Thou hast promised graciously
To hear all those who cry to Thee,
Through Him whose name alone is great,
Our Savior and our Advocate.

And thus we come, O God, to-day,
And all our woes before Thee lay;
For tried, afflicted, lo! we stand,
Perils and foes on every hand.

Ah! hide not for our sins Thy face,
Absolve us through Thy boundless grace,
Be with us in our anguish still,
Free us at last from every ill,—

That so with all our hearts we may
Once more our glad thanksgiving pay,
And walk obedient to Thy Word,
And now and ever praise Thee, Lord.

The Believing Christian Thanks God after the Thunderstorm Is Past.

EXHORTATION.

God thundereth marvelously with His voice; great things doeth He, which we cannot comprehend. *Job 37, 5.*

All the works which the Lord does in the sight of men are exceedingly great, and every one who observes them finds delight, joy, and pleasure in them. This applies especially to the thunderstorm when we consider it properly. Although it is produced by natural causes, it is nevertheless in God's hand. It is God who

thunders. He governs the clouds that are filled with vapor and fire. He guides them according to His pleasure. He employs them for His purpose, and sends them to accomplish His design. Accordingly, His thunder is always terrible. It is terrible and fearful to behold, and listen to, a thunderstorm. Men are startled. Dumb brutes tremble and roar. All that has breath is thrown into anxiety and fear. What else does God manifest by such an event than His great power and majesty, by which He can set all things in commotion, the moment He causes His voice to be heard on earth by the rumbling in the clouds?

But God accomplishes still more by a thunderstorm. He performs great things, which result, now in damage, now in profit to men: in damage, when the lightning shatters sturdy trees, sets houses on fire, strikes and kills men and beasts; in profit, because by the concussions of the thunder the atmosphere is purified and the fruitfulness of the soil is increased. Is not this another proof that the God who can accomplish such great things in such an incomprehensible manner must be a great and glorious God?

It is but proper that all men who view these acts of the Lord frequently should be roused to a living knowledge and humble adoration of Him. However, in numerous instances this lesson is disregarded. God does great things by means of His thunder, and yet is not known. Most men are scared and depressed as long as they hear the discharges of thunder; but as soon as the storm is past, all impressions which they received are also past. Everything is forgotten, just as if they had not heard the voice of the Lord, as if they had not heard what great things He had done for them. If the tempest has caused damage, they show a fleeting sympathy and pity to those who have been damaged. But if it fortunately passed by without doing harm, no account of it is taken, and thus God continues to be an unknown God to them. O what hard hearts which will not permit themselves to be softened! O what criminal insensibility! O what shameful ingratitude!

True Christians guard against these things with all care. They behold and contemplate attentively the works of nature, and suffer themselves to be guided to their Creator by them. They do this especially when the God of glory thunders in the heavens. When they behold a storm coming up, they marvel at the majesty, grandeur, and glory of Him who causes it to arise. When they

hear the thunder roll overhead, and see the lightnings flash about them, they commit themselves calmly and confidently into the hands of the Lord, where they always are, and in childlike trust expect from Him all good things. When the tempest has passed by harmlessly, they return thanks to God; they praise and glorify His goodness and faithfulness with heart, lips, and hands. And that leads them to God and brings them nothing but salvation and blessing. Of this the mouth of Truth Himself assures them when He says: "Whoso offereth praise glorifies Me, and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God."

PRAYER.

O God of my salvation, I, too, long for Thy salvation. Therefore I now approach Thy throne of grace to offer Thee the sacrifice of praise and thanks due Thee, because Thou hast graciously delivered me out of trouble, terror, and danger. I was full of anxiety when I heard Thy mighty voice in the air, because I did not know what Thou wouldst perform by its means. I took refuge in Thee by prayer, and committed myself and all that is mine to Thy fatherly care, and Thou didst not cast me away, but didst show cordial concern for me, and didst prove by deed that Thou art glad to help.

How easily might Thy lightnings have set our houses and forests on fire! How easily might the tempest have crushed the fruits in our fields! How easily could the uproar have consumed and utterly destroyed our possessions and belongings! How easily Thou mightest have made us as Adamah, and dealt with us as with Zeboim! And all this Thou mightest have done justly if Thou hadst intended to deal with us according to our sins and reward us as we had merited according to our iniquities. But

Thou hast not done this. Thou hast remembered us in love. Thou hast yielded Thy right and given Thy mercy sway. Thou hast spared us punishment, and, instead, hast showered Thy blessings upon us. It is because of Thy goodness, O God, that we can put our trust under the shadow of Thy wings, and that we may again dwell in safety. It is because of Thy goodness that we are not consumed, and Thy mercy is without end. This my soul knoweth right well.

Moved, humbled, and yet filled with gratitude, I come before Thee and say: Thou, Lord, hast done great things for me, whereof I am glad. Give unto the Lord glory and strength. Worship Him in the beauty of holiness. Fear before Him, all the earth. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth; make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Bless the Lord, Thou my soul, also, and forget not what great things He has now done for thee.

I have now seen, O strong and almighty God, how Thou hast so soon, so graciously turned aside the severe and terrible tempest, and hast let it pass by without causing damage. Rouse me by this event that in all troubles which may yet befall me I may firmly trust in Thee and hope in Thy goodness. I behold again a serene sky; let me henceforth taste and see at all times that Thou art good. I have again seen Thy greatness and glory; let this cheer me to face Thee always with childlike fear, cordial love, and humble reverence, and to walk before Thee so as to please Thee. I have again felt Thy beneficent

hand; let me and mine and all men be committed to the same for the future.

If the tempest that passed us by has caused damage and harm elsewhere, be gracious and have compassion on the injured. Guide them so as to make them see that it is Thy hand that has chastised them, in order that they may humble themselves under it. Comfort and refresh them. Restore to them what they have lost by other blessings. Let them soon hear joy and gladness, that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice.

But let me also administer, employ, and use right faithfully and well the gifts and possessions which Thou hast preserved and, as it were, given to me anew. Let me receive my daily bread with thanksgiving. Let me manage my possessions as a faithful steward. Grant that I may not misuse them and employ them for dissipation and prodigality, but always use them for Thy glory, for my benefit, and for the welfare of my fellow-men, in order that I may render a cheerful account to Thee at the end.

Afford Thy gracious protection to all that I have also in the future, and guard it against destruction. If many more tempests are to arise, threatening ruin to me, let me be undismayed and trust in Thy mercy and right confidently hope in Thy goodness. On such occasions let me experience that surely no one will be put to confusion who hopes in Thee. Yea, if it should be Thy will to visit me in the future with a tempest and to make me poor, in that case make me truly rich before in spirit, in order that, while losing all, I may keep Thee, and Thy

communion and heaven. If I but obtain heaven, I have all that I need.

O my Father, O my Savior, O my Comforter, Thou that dwellest in the heavens, and hast granted me protection, aid, and help during the tempest that is now passed by, bring me also into heaven to Thee, that I may behold Thee face to face and give Thee praise and thanks forever. Teach me by Thy Word to walk in the true way, and to do what is well-pleasing to Thee. Lead me in the land of uprightness. Unite my heart to fear Thy name. Let me remain loyal to Thee in my faith, in love, and in hope, and never cease from my godliness until my end shall come, in order that when the Lord Jesus on that Day of Judgment shall be revealed with flames of fire and with thunder and lightning to execute vengeance upon those who do not know God and are not obedient to His Gospel, I may not be terrified, but lift up my head with joy, and enter with Him into the life eternal.

With my lamp well trimmed and burning, Swift to hear and loath to roam, Watching for Thy glad returning To restore me to my home, Come, my Savior; Thou hast promised: quickly come. Amen.

HYMN.

I know not why the flowers lift
Their faces to the sun,
I know not why they softly droop
When the long day is done;
I know not how the bright stars swing,
Majestic, ceaseless, true,
I know not how the soft, gray clouds
Steal o'er the bonny blue,—
But this I know, let come what may,
The great God rules by night and day.

I know not how the sparrow lives,
 No winter's store at hand;
 And how the spider weaves her web
 I do not understand;
 I know not how the prying bee
 Doth find the honey-flowers,
 Nor how the tiny nest is lined
 Where timid field-mouse cowers,—
 But this I know, that, great or small,
 God's gracious care embraces all.

How God protects in danger's hour
 Is mystery to me,
 How Love forgives my faithlessness,
 It is not mine to see;
 I know not how He knows my need
 And sends me rich supply;
 Faith only grasps His mightiness
 And strong in faith I cry,—
 Let come what will, let go what may,
 God's child is safe by night and day.

The Believing Christian Prays to God when He Leaves Home to Start on a Journey.

EXHORTATION.

The Lord is thy Keeper; the Lord is thy Shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; He shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and even forevermore. *Ps. 121, 5—8.*

Manifold reasons may urge a believing Christian to leave home and travel, partly his professional business, partly love of his fellow-man, partly his state of health; for journeys for luxury and dissipation are not becoming to a true child of God. But if there is a compelling reason why a believing Christian must leave his home and estate for a season, he should (1) start his journey with prayer, and reflect when he leaves his home that God is with him in every place in the foreign country to which he is going, and that He sees and hears everything.

Accordingly, he must conduct himself as being in God's presence, in an honorable, well-behaved, godly, Christian manner. (2) At the beginning of his journey a believing Christian should commend himself to God's gracious protection, praying that God would bring him home again in good health and with sound limbs. For many have lost life and health and met with misfortune while traveling. (3) He should also commend those whom he leaves behind, as well as his home and possessions, to God, that He may through His holy angels take everything into His safe-keeping, and guard it against conflagrations, floods, and calamities. (4) He should pray God to let him find his possessions unharmed and his dear ones in good health on his return.

PRAYER.

Gracious and merciful God, in Thy name I have resolved to be absent from my dear ones and my home for some time; therefore I come to Thee and pray Thee: Bless my going out and my coming in. In Thy name I shall begin my journey; let me accomplish it with Thee as my Companion, and let me return to my home under Thy protection. Let the host of angels surround and guard me like Jacob; let Thy angel stand by me in every danger as by St. Paul; let the company of Thy angels travel with me going and coming, as with Joseph and Mary when they fled to Egypt with the young Child Jesus, that I may remain safe from all misfortune, from thieves, murderers, and any other injury. O Thou Keeper of Israel, who dost not sleep nor slumber, be a wall of fire around me by day and by night, as around Elisha, that no misfortune or disaster may come nigh me. Accompany me early and late, in forests and fields, with Thy holy angels' watch, as Thou didst guide the children of Israel through the desert with a cloudy pillar. Be my Companion when I am traveling; stay with me when I rest;

watch for me while I am sleeping. Yes, Lord, Lord, take care of me wherever I go, and let me be commended to Thy holy protection.

Grant that every hour there may be ringing in my ears the words which Thou didst send Abraham on his journey from home: "Walk before Me and be thou perfect." Let me have before my eyes in foreign lands Thy most holy presence. Keep me from lusting after evil things while I am absent from home and traveling. Guard me against gluttony, dissipation, impudence, wickedness, conformity with worldly men, and committing sinful and shameful acts. Help me to return to my home with an untarnished conscience. Turn my eyes away when they behold something wicked; turn my mind away from evil lusts when they arise in my heart. Keep me from contaminating either my body or my soul on this journey. Grant that I may bear in mind that Thou hearest everything I speak, that Thou seest everything I do, and that Thou art wherever I am going, standing, or am busy, and listenest to me and observest me, lest I sin against Thee and draw down upon myself Thy anger and disfavor.

I commit to Thee all that belongs to me and that I leave at home; guard it against thieves, conflagration, and floods, and let me find everything undestroyed and undamaged on my return. I commit to Thee also my dear ones whom I leave behind. O my God, I am going away from them, but do Thou stay with them. Graciously avert from them every danger, every injury, every misfortune and sickness. Let me see them again in good health; be their Protector; preserve them, guide them, guard them, and let no sad message reach me. Let them

live before Thee, and enjoy Thy protection and favor. In due time let me return safely to my home, and find my loved ones safe and sound in Thy protection.

O Lord Jesus, who didst journey with two disciples in the guise of a traveler, be with me also while I am on my journey and fill my heart with good thoughts. Give me godly companions, that we may not by shameful words and wicked conversations sin against Thee on this journey, but may think of Thee and converse in Thy most holy presence about Thy goodness, Thy wonderful works, Thy faithfulness and truth. O my God, in Thy name I have begun this journey; let me safely finish it in Thy name, and I will with my loved ones heartily praise and glorify Thee for Thy protection as long as I live.

Let my life and conversation Be directed by Thy Word; Lord,
Thy constant preservation To Thine erring child afford; Nowhere
but alone in Thee From all harm can I be free. Wholly to Thy
blest protection I commit my heart and mind, Mighty God, to Thy
direction Wholly may I be resigned. Lord, my Shield, my Light
divine, O accept and own me Thine! Lord, to me Thine angel
sending, Keep me from the subtle Foe; From his craft and might
defending, Never let Thy wand'rer go, Till my final rest shall come,
And Thine angel bear me home. Amen.

HYMN.

Jesus, my Truth, my Way,
My sure, unerring Light,
On Thee my feeble soul I stay,
Which Thou wilt lead aright.

My Wisdom and my Guide,
My Counselor Thou art:
O let me never leave Thy side,
Nor from Thy paths depart.

Thou seest my feebleness;
Jesus, be Thou my Power,
My Help and Refuge in distress,
My Fortress, and my Tower.

Give me to trust in Thee;
Be Thou my sure Abode;
My Horn, and Rock, and Buckler be,
My Savior and my God.

Myself I cannot save,
Myself I cannot keep;
But strength in Thee I surely have,
Whose eyelids never sleep.

My soul to Thee alone
Now, therefore, I commend:
Thou, Jesus, having loved Thine own,
Wilt love me to the end.

PRAYER OF A PERSON LIVING IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

Far from my friends and acquaintances I find myself in foreign parts, where I know very few people. But I know Thee, O Jesus, Thou Son of the Most High, as my Immanuel, as my Brother, as my best Friend. Therefore I turn to Thee and humbly pray Thee to take care of me, and not to forsake me until I have returned to my home, yea, until I have come to Thee in Thy heavenly kingdom.

Thou hast given the comforting promise to Thine own: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Fulfil this promise to me, and let me feel Thy gracious presence at all times and in all places. Thou hast hallowed all our travels when in Thy youth Thou didst visit Jerusalem and other places, and when during Thy min-

istry Thou didst journey to and fro in the land of the Jews, doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. Let me always remember this, and, following Thy example, let me do nothing while I am abroad, except what is good, what is praiseworthy, and what is of good report. After Thy resurrection Thou didst join Thy disciples on the way to Emmaus, and at their request didst abide with them. Abide with me also, and do not leave me. Remain my Companion, my Protection, my Succor, my Counselor, my Guide, and my Deliverer.

O Lord Jesus, let me feel in every situation that Thou art near me. Guard me against evil company, and if I should fall in with such, make me strong, so that I may not sin and allow myself to be led astray. Give me strength to resist all allurements and temptations to sin, and to preserve a good conscience. Raise up for me faithful and good friends with whom I can be intimate, and let me enjoy their company with profit and blessing to myself. Take me into Thy protection, body and soul, and give me not only health of body, but also this grace, that my body may shelter an uncontaminated soul and an unsullied conscience. Give me by Thy Spirit the contentment of Moses, the chastity of Joseph, the godliness of Samuel, the temperance of Daniel. Fill my mind with wisdom that in all my doings I may act uprightly. Incline my will unto virtue that I may exercise myself therein, so as to gain for myself, and to keep, a good reputation while I am abroad, and to bring home a good report and be able to enjoy Thy favor. Bridle my passions, lest I become involved in strife and worry. Let me

faithfully keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

My Savior, strengthen me especially to the end that I may confess and glorify Thee before the world with lips and heart, with words and works. And if I should ever be assailed on account of my faith, grant me the grace to be ready at all times to give a reason of the hope that is in me, and that I may in no wise permit myself to be led astray into falling away from, or denying, Thy doctrine or into unfaithfulness toward Thee. Let Thy Word ever be a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. Then I shall be able to walk blamelessly and to stand before Thee at all times.

O my merciful God, keep me also in health and preserve my life. Let me hear none but good tidings from my loved ones. Bless my business, on account of which I am detained here, and let all my enterprises prosper. And when I have achieved my object, bring me safely and happily back to my dear ones, and I shall pay Thee all my vows, and praise and magnify Thee without ceasing for the faithfulness and love which Thou hast shown me. Upon my return home let me ever bear in mind that I am both Thy stranger and Thy sojourner, and that at all times I may walk so as to be able to pursue my pilgrimage on earth with Thee, to complete it happily, and then enter my true fatherland in heaven and there live in communion with Thee forever.

And though through desert wilds I fare, Yet Jesus Christ is with me there; The Lord Himself is near. In all my dangers He will come, And He who kept me safe at home Can keep me safely there. Amen.

HYMN.

If thou but suffer God to guide thee,
And hope in Him through all thy ways,
He'll give thee strength, whate'er betide thee,
And bear thee through the evil days;
Who trusts in God's unchanging love
Builds on the Rock that naught can move.

What can these anxious cares avail thee,
These never-ceasing moans and sighs?
What can it help if thou bewail thee
O'er each dark moment as it flies?
Our cross and trials do but press
The heavier for our bitterness.

Only be still and wait His leisure
In cheerful hope with heart content,
To take whate'er thy Father's pleasure
And His discerning love hath sent;
Nor doubt our inmost wants are known
To Him who chose us for His own.

He knows the time for joy, and, truly,
Will send it when He sees it meet;
When He has tried and purged thee duly
And finds thee free from all deceit,
He comes to thee all unaware,
And makes thee own His loving care.

Nor think amid the heat of trial
That God hath cast thee off unheard;
That he whose hopes meet no denial
Must surely be of God preferred;
Time passes and much change doth bring,
And sets a bound to everything.

All are alike before the Highest;
'Tis easy to our God, we know,
To raise thee up, though low thou liest,
To make the rich man poor and low;
True wonders still by Him are wrought
Who setteth up and brings to naught.

Sing, pray, and keep His ways unswerving;
So do thine own part faithfully,
And trust His Word, though undeserving,
Thou yet shalt find it true for thee;
God never will forsake in need
The soul that trusts in Him indeed.

PRAYER OF A PERSON WHO IS LYING SICK IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY.

O Thou infinitely great God, how very strange are the ways which Thou ledest men, how utterly incomprehensible are the dispensations and guidings which they experience from Thee,—thus I must say now that I approach Thee, though lying on this sick-bed. When I started from home on my journey, I was hale and hearty; now I am sick and miserable. While I was traveling, and until I arrived at this place, I was strong and robust; now I am faint and weak. Thus the world that smiled when morn was come may change for me ere close of eve.

O my God, let this redound to my benefit. Let me learn from it how vain and transitory is the life, happiness, and prosperity of men here on earth, in order that I may never place my trust in these things, never set my affection upon them, but strive and press forward after those things which are eternal and imperishable. Teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom. Teach me to see that, verily, man at his best estate is altogether vanity.

I must confess and acknowledge, indeed, that I am particularly grieved because I am far from my loved ones, because I cannot enjoy their society and comforting conversation, and because I do not

know whether I shall ever see their faces again. But I will not lose heart on that account, but hope in Thee, my Father, who art with me also in these foreign parts, who carest for me even here, and wilt surely not fail to watch over me.

Accordingly, I calmly place myself into Thine arms and say: Do with me as seemeth good in Thy sight. Above all things, take loving care of my soul lest it perish. Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned. Heal me, and I shall be healed. Graciously forgive me all sins with which I have ever offended and grieved Thee. Forgive them for the sake of Thy Son, my Reconciler, for Jesus Christ's sake. Strengthen my faith in His name, and let me always pray to Thee in His name, and seek the help that I need. Work mightily in my heart by Thy Spirit, and fashion me here in time as Thou wouldst have me be in eternity. Let Him bear witness to my spirit that I am a child of grace and an heir of everlasting life. Give me the needful patience, that I may not murmur against Thee, or that I may not rebel against Thee, but resignedly accept and endure whatever Thou layest upon me.

Thou, O Lord, art He that giveth power to the faint and increasest strength to them that have no might. Do this also to me according to Thy great mercy. If I am to suffer much pain, let me consider that it is still much less than my sins have merited. If I am to suffer a long time, let me nevertheless quietly submit to Thee and wait for the hour of my help and deliverance from morning to morning. And when it comes, let me be gladdened beholding Thy mercy. Do with me as it seems good to Thee. Thy will is best. Convince my heart that this is so.

Teach me to pray with my Savior: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." If it be possible, if it please Thee, restore me to health. To that end bless the medicine which I take, and let me gain strength from day to day. Reward the faithfulness and care of those who are taking care of me, a stranger, and be Thou their Shield and exceeding great Reward. But if it do not please Thee to let me rise again from this sick-bed; if it is Thy will that I shall find my grave in a foreign land, be it so; only give me strength that I may surrender my will entirely to Thy good and gracious will. In that event let me bear in mind that the whole earth is Thine, and that Thou art able to find and quicken my decayed bones here too. Take my absent friends and relatives into Thy protection. Bless them with spiritual and temporal blessings. Let Thy Spirit guide them in an even path, in order that we may meet again yonder in the joy of heaven, and jointly praise and glorify Thee. Lord, I hope in Thee, and firmly believe that Thou wilt do all things well. My trust is in Thee alone, therefore I say in full confidence:

Where should else my hopes be centered? Grace o'erwhelms me with its flood; Thou, my Savior, once hast entered Holiest heaven through Thy blood. Eternal redemption for sinners there finding, From hell's dark dominion my spirit unbinding, To me perfect freedom Thy entrance has brought, And childlike to cry "Abba, Father," I'm taught. — Christ Himself, my Shepherd, feeds me, Peace and joy my spirit fill; In a pasture green He leads me Forth beside the waters still. Oh! naught to my soul is so sweet and reviving As thus unto Jesus alone to be living; True happiness this, and this only, supplies, Through faith on my Savior to fasten mine eyes. Amen.

HYMN.

O Thou, from whom all goodness flows,
I lift my heart to Thee;
In all my sorrows, conflicts, woes,
Dear Lord, remember me!

When on my aching, burdened heart
My sins lie heavily,
My pardon speak, new peace impart;
In love remember me.

Temptations sore obstruct my way,
And ills I cannot flee;
O give me strength, Lord, as my day;
For good remember me.

Distressed with pain, disease, and grief,
This feeble body see;
Grant patience, rest, and kind relief;
Hear, and remember me.

When in the solemn hour of death
I wait Thy just decree,
Be this the prayer of my last breath,
Good Lord, remember me!

And when before Thy throne I stand
And lift my soul to Thee,
Then with the saints at Thy right hand,
Good Lord, remember me!

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING WHEN A PERSON HAS COMPLETED A JOURNEY AND RETURNED SAFELY TO HIS HOME.

Lord, Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, who art able to do abundantly above all that we ask or think, who art rich in mercy and favor towards those who fear Thee and walk in Thy ways: behold, I come before Thy most holy countenance for the

first time in my own home, after safely completing with Thy aid the journey which I undertook in Thy name. I have vowed that I would give Thee thanks, and I now wish to pay my vow. Lift up my heart to Thee in fervent devotion and zeal, and incline Thine ear to my cry, my King and my God!

I cannot hide it from Thee that my heart was full of anxiety when I left my home. Many were my misgivings when I thought of the numerous dangers to which travelers are frequently exposed. And how easily I might have met with disaster! How easily I might have fallen into the hands of murderers and robbers, who would have robbed and slain me! How easily I might have met with an accident in which I would have been crippled! How easily sickness, pain, and death might have snatched me away, or hindered me in my business! How easily my house and home, my estate and property, might have suffered damage during my absence! But all this has not come to pass, and this I owe solely and alone to Thy mighty protection, Thy fatherly care, Thy powerful aid, and Thy faithful guidance. To Thee, to Thee alone, then, be blessing, praise, honor, and glory!

However, not only hast Thou so graciously guarded me against all accidents and misfortunes during the journey which I have now completed, but Thou hast also shown me many a kindness during the same. Thou hast kept me in good health; Thou hast given me faithful companions on my journey; in all places Thou didst raise up good friends for me; Thou hast blessed my business. Thou hast taken all my possessions under Thy protection so that I have found them undamaged upon

my return; Thou hast kept my loved ones in good health as I prayed for, and hast granted me a glad and joyful return to them. How great is Thy mercy! How manifold are Thy benefits! How immeasurable are the riches of Thy grace and love!

What shall I, what can I render Thee for all the goodness that Thou hast manifested toward me? I am unable to do so; I am too weak and powerless for this task. I thank Thee with heart and voice and hands. With a heart filled with gratitude I say: Thousand, thousand thanks to Thee, O great King, for all these favors! Let this feeble thank-offering be acceptable to Thee because of Thy mercy and the perfect atonement of Jesus. O Father, deign Thou, I beseech Thee, to listen to my earthly lays; a nobler strain in heaven shall reach Thee, when I with angels hymn Thy praise, and learn amid their choirs to sing loud hallelujahs to my King.

However, my God, now that I am again with my loved ones, let me continue to enjoy Thy favor and grace with them. Stir me up to relate to them frequently what great things Thou hast done for me on my journey, in order that they may be incited to praise and admiration of Thy faithfulness and love and to childlike trust in Thee. Let me live with them in quiet, peace, and true contentment as long as I shall still be with them, and let me be ever careful of this one thing, that I may serve Thee in holiness and righteousness before Thee. Let me also well apply the blessing which Thou hast bestowed upon me through this journey, and always regard and use it with thanksgiving. In general, let me view the entire remainder of my life as a journey to eternity. Accordingly, let me spend it in the

power of Thy good Spirit, in the fear of God, in piety, and in Thy service. Let me pursue without wearying my pilgrimage to the heavenly fatherland, and successfully overcome everything that obstructs my path. And when I have finished my course, receive me into Thy eternal, heavenly kingdom, and bring me to the rest which Thou hast appointed and prepared for Thy people in yonder world. There I shall laud and praise Thee as is meet. There I shall glorify Thee. There I shall extol Thee forever because of the faithfulness of Thy love.

Praise the God of all creation For His boundless love; Praise the Lamb, our Expiation, Priest enthroned above, Praise the Spirit of salvation, Him by whom we live; Undivided adoration To the Godhead give! Amen.

HYMN.

The Lord hath helped me hitherto
By His surpassing favor;
His mercies ev'ry morn were new,
His kindness did not waver.
God hitherto hath been my Guide,
Hath pleasures hitherto supplied,
And hitherto hath helped me.

I praise and thank Thee, Lord, my God,
For Thine abundant blessing
Which heretofore Thou hast bestowed
And I am still possessing.
Inscribe this on my memory:
The Lord hath done great things for me,
And graciously hath helped me.

Help me in future, God of grace,
Help me on each occasion,
Help me in each and ev'ry place,
Help me through Jesus' Passion;
Help me in life and death, O God,
Help me through Jesus' dying blood,
Help me as Thou hast helped me!

The Believing Christian Prays in Time of War.

EXHORTATION.

Behold, O Lord; for I am in distress; my bowels are troubled; mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled; abroad the sword bereaveth, at home there is as death. The Lord hath bent His bow like an enemy. He hath swallowed up all palaces. The young and the old lie on the ground in the streets; my virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword.

Lam. 1, 20; 2, 4, 5. 21.

The three plagues with which God in His anger makes whole countries and cities waste and desolate are war, famine, and pestilence. Jer. 19, 12. War is a severe punishment; for when God withdraws His protection from a country, its enemies soon make ready to attack it.

The reasons why God punishes a country with war and devastation are various: 1) Disobedience, Is. 1, 19, 20; (2) living after the lusts of one's heart, and setting aside the fear of God, Judg. 4, 1; 6, 1; (3) contempt of God's Word, either by not hearing it at all, or by failing to live in accordance with it, Lev. 26, 17; (4) idolatry, Judg. 2, 12—14, whether it be of the gross or the subtle kind. Under this head belong dissipation, fornication, murder, the shedding of innocent blood, the oppression of strangers, and widows, the despoiling of the poor. But when God calls to the sword and takes away peace, Jer. 25, 29, He also takes away the valor of the sword, Ps. 89, 43, so that a multitude of people and a great army obtain no victories, thus compelling them to flee before their enemies, Ps. 44, 10, and bringing on destruction, sacking, and oppression of their country, and, finally, misery and wretchedness.

PRAYER.

O God, whom we have provoked to anger! We come before Thee in the anguish of our heart, we bend our knees before Thy most holy countenance, and bewail the great misery into which our great sins and Thy just anger have brought us. Lord, Lord, we dwelt securely under Thy protection; no sword durst frighten us, because Thou wast the foe

of our foes and the adversary of our adversaries. We went out and in at our gates in peace, and enjoyed the fruits of the land undisturbed. But now, O great God, Thou hast withdrawn from us Thy protection and our peace; therefore the foe has started against us and unsheathed the sword; he threatens to burn, sack, and destroy our cities, and to overrun our country.

What shall we say in our fright? We must confess that we have long ago deserved punishment and the rod of chastisement. Alas! we have misused the times of peace and prosperity. When we ought to have been built up in Thee and walked in Thy fear, serving and obeying Thee, alas! contempt of Thy Word, misuse of Thy holy name, injustice, security, wickedness, and most abominable vices were rampant among us. We are ashamed to speak of all our abominations before Thee, O God, whom we have provoked; they are crying to heaven anyway.

O merciful God, remember not our iniquities, which are as many as the sands upon the shore, but according to Thy mercy remember us for Thy goodness' sake. We prostrate ourselves before Thee in supplication, relying not upon our righteousness, but on Thy grace and mercy. We have sinned and done evil; we have been wicked, we have apostatized, and departed from Thy commandments. O Lord, rebuke us not in Thine anger, neither chasten us in Thy hot displeasure. We flee to the mercy-seat, to Jesus Christ, our only Helper and Advocate. Behold His blood and His wounds! O merciful God, have compassion on us! If Thou wilt deal with us according to our sins and Thy

justice, the enemy will exterminate us, swallow us up, consume us with fire, and overwhelm us, and there will be none to deliver us.

O mighty Protector of the distressed, arise, lest men overpower us. Thou canst arm us with strength for the battle; Thou canst cast down before us those who stand arrayed against us. In Thee is all our trust and all our hope in this great distress. Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee. O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? Shall the enemy blaspheme Thy name forever, as though none could deliver us out of his hand? Deliver us, O God of our salvation, and forgive us our sins for Thy name's sake. Take away from the enemies their courage; scatter them, and watch over our entire land, over our houses and homes. Let peace spring up speedily, and avert the danger in which we are involved. Lord, to Thee belongs the honor of shattering swords, cutting spears in sunder, and burning chariots in the fire. O God of love, hear the cries of those who are now surrounded by dangers, and are in the hands of the enemy, and must endure many an ignominy and merciless treatment. Have compassion on the poor, the widows, the aged and stricken in years, the children and infants which cannot flee. Make a speedy end of this wasteful war, and hear our prayer for the sake of Thy goodness and mercy.

God bless our native land! Firm may she ever stand Through storm and night; When the wild tempests rave, Ruler of wind and wave, Do Thou our country save By Thy great might. For her our prayer shall rise To God above the skies; On Him we wait: Thou who art ever nigh, Guarding with watchful eye, To Thee aloud we cry, God, save the State. Amen.

HYMN.

Zion mourns in fear and anguish,
Zion, city of our God.
"Ah!" she saith, "how sore I languish,
Bowed beneath so hard a load;
God hath sure forsook me quite,
And forgot my evil plight," —
Nay, the Lord, who chose thee spares thee,
For within His heart He bears thee.

"Once," she mourns, "He promised plainly
That His help should aye be near,
Yet I now must seek Him vainly
In my days of woe and fear.
Will He, then, forevermore
Keep His anger, and no more
Help His chosen generation
In their present tribulation?"

"Zion, surely I have loved thee!"
Thus to her the Highest saith,
"Although many woes have proved thee,
And thy soul is sad to death,
Yet now cast thy griefs behind;
Where wilt thou a mother find
For her own child not providing,
Or in hatred with it chiding?"

"And if thou couldst find a mother
Who forgot her infant's claim,
Or whose wrath her love could smother,
Yet would I be still the same;
For My truth is pledged to thee,
Zion, thou art dear to Me,
I within My heart have set thee,
And I never can forget thee.

"Let not Satan make thee craven,
He can fight, but cannot harm;
On My hands thy name is graven,
And thy shield is still My arm.

How, then, could it ever be
That I failed to think of thee,
Build the wall of My own city,
And look down on thee with pity?

“Thou before My eyes art ever,
In My bosom thou art laid
As a nursing child, and never
Shalt thou lack My timely aid.
Me and thee no time, nor stress,
War, nor danger, nor distress,
No, nor Satan’s self shall sever,—
Only be thou faithful ever.”

The Believing Christian Praises and Thanks God for the Restoration of Peace.

EXHORTATION.

Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our Refuge. *Ps. 46, 8—11.*

No gladder tidings can ring out after a bloody and grievous war than this: There is peace! Then fugitives return to their homes; the banished have hope of regaining their own; the land recuperates and teems with joy because it is no longer trampled by the feet of the enemy.

A believing Christian regards peace as a gift that comes down from above; accordingly, with his heart and voice in unison, he praises God (1) because He has made an end of the destruction, the robbery, the pillaging, the slaughter, the incendiarism, the conflagrations, and because the inhabitants of the land have been delivered from the terror and violence of the enemy. He returns thanks (2) because amidst the dangers of the war God has protected him and his possessions, and has not given them as spoils into the hands of the enemy.

He perceives (3) that blessed peace is like the sun and the dew, which raises up and refreshes what was drooping. He prays God (4) to let the peace become permanent and to restrain all disturbers of peace. (5) He employs the times of peace not for dissipation and voluptuousness, but for his growth in the Christian religion and for serving His God without let and hindrance.

PRAYER.

Lord, Lord, gracious, merciful, and abundant in goodness, by a just judgment Thou hast hitherto deprived our country of peace, because we had misused our days of prosperity and peace, and on that account a bloody war arose. Thou didst summon our enemies for our chastisement: they had to draw their swords, slaughter us, lay the country waste, and fill us with terror and dread. Although we had deserved to be utterly destroyed by this war, still in the midst of Thine anger Thou didst remember Thy mercy; Thou didst inspire the warring hosts with thoughts of peace, for which we return Thee glad and heartfelt thanks. At Thy command the sword went back into its scabbard; the fugitives are returning, and we may again pass in and out at our gates quietly and without danger. Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion. For He hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; He hath blessed thy children within thee; He maketh peace in thy borders.

What a blessed treasure is peace, in which the whole country rejoices! To-day Thou renewest to us the promise: "Ye shall dwell in your land safely. And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid; neither shall the sword go through your land." O Lord,

make this peace to last during the time of our life; lift up Thy countenance upon us, and give us peace, as a glorious portion of that divine blessing which Thou hast laid upon Thy people. Let our peace be like a stream of water that never diminishes, but wells up from its source and flows constantly; for Thou alone maintainest our peace according to Thy sure promise. Let righteousness and peace kiss each other, and righteousness look down from heaven.

Give us Thy Holy Spirit that we may not misuse this blessed peace for dissipation, gluttony, and security, but for building ourselves up and walking in the fear of the Lord. Refresh the devastated land with Thy blessing, and always regard us with thoughts of peace. At the end of our lives let us depart in peace and enter the home of peace.

O holy Father, who hast led Thy children, In all the ages, with the fire and cloud, Through seas dry-shod; through weary wastes bewildering; To Thee, in reverent love, our hearts are bowed. O holy Jesus, Prince of Peace and Savior, To Thee, we owe the peace that now prevails, Stilling the rude wills of men's wild behavior, And calming passion's fierce and stormy gales. O Holy Ghost, the Lord and the Life-giver, Thine is the quickening power that gives increase From Thee hath flowed, as from a pleasant river, Our plenty, wealth, prosperity, and peace. O Triune God, with heart and voice adoring, Praise we the goodness that has crowned the day; Pray we that Thou wilt hear us, still imploring Thy love and favor, kept to us alway. Amen.

HYMN.

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy Health and Salvation.

Join the full throng;

Wake, harp and psalter and song;

Sound forth in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,
Who, as on wings of an eagle, uplifteth, sustaineth.

Hast thou not seen

How thy desires all have been

Granted in what He ordaineth?

Praise to the Lord, who hath fearfully, wondrously made thee;
Health hath vouchsafed, and when heedlessly falling hath stayed
thee.

What need or grief

Ever hath failed of relief?

Wings of His mercy did shade thee.

Praise to the Lord, who doth visibly bless and defend thee;
Who, from the heavens, the streams of His mercy doth send thee;

Ponder anew

What the Almighty can do,

If with His love He befriend thee!

Praise to the Lord! Oh, let all that is in me adore Him!

All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before Him!

He is thy Light;

Soul, keep it always in sight,

Gladly forever adore Him.

The Believing Christian Prays to God when His Country has been Visited with Hard Times and Famines.

EXHORTATION.

Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem; and they shall eat bread by weight and with care; and they shall drink water by measure and with astonishment.

Ezek. 4, 16.

As tame and wild animals are trained by means of hunger to learn something and to forget their wildness, so God, as a rule, puts a bit and bridle into the mouths of men when they will not submit to Him. God seeks to attract them for a long time with blessings, but if they will not let His goodness lead them to repentance, He sends famine into their land, either by a failure of

crops or by war, or by hard times and scarcity, or by withholding His blessing from the food, so that people eat and are not satisfied.

This punishment is usually visited upon men, (1) when they esteem the Word of God lightly, and only think of high living, Is. 5, 13; (2) when they persecute godly people and the servants of God, Jer. 11, 22; (3) when they gladly hear the voice of false prophets, Jer. 14, 15. 16; (4) when they are stiff-necked, Jer. 24, 10; (5) when they remain disobedient, Ezek. 4, 16; or (6) when they practise violence towards their inferiors, 2 Sam. 21, 1. 2. In the wake of a famine come poverty, distress, starvation, so that parents, driven by fierce hunger, have eaten their children, and sought other horrid means to relieve their distress. (7) When to such a physical famine there is added a spiritual hunger, Amos 8, 11, the distress is unspeakable.

PRAYER.

O righteous God, who renderest to every man according to his works, and lettest wrath, tribulation, and anguish come upon those who do evil, we come before Thy most holy countenance, ashamed because we have sinned so grievously that Thou must force us to prayer and obedience by means of hunger. Oh, how abundantly didst Thou feed in former years! We had bread a-plenty; the earth brought forth the loveliest and best fruits. Like bands of love these gifts should have drawn us to Thee, the generous Giver, and led us to repentance. But how shamefully were they misused for gluttony, high living, and surfeiting, so that these very creatures had to groan because they were received with ungrateful hands by ungrateful men. Is it a wonder, then, that our fertile land bears nothing because of the sins of those dwelling in it? Thou chastisest us with hard times, scarcity, and drought, so that the earth yields its fruits sparingly, and our country is oppressed with want.

O Lord, hear the cry of the poor who are begging bread and cannot appease their hunger. Let Thy heart be moved with the cries of the children, the wails of their parents, the distress that fills all homes in town and country. It seems that Thou hast withdrawn Thy blessing from our food: we eat, and are not satisfied; we take much food, and almost faint with hunger. And the cattle, the dumb creatures, are crying to their Creator for food.

O Lord, Lord, gracious and merciful, long-suffering and abundant in goodness, have mercy upon us. Return to us with Thy blessing which Thou hast withdrawn from us. The rivers are full of water; therefore visit the earth and water it. Let heaven hear the cry of the earth, and do Thou Thyself hear us from Thy sanctuary. Let the famine cease; return to us with Thy grace; feed the hungry; gladden the poor; bless our scant supply of bread, which we are sorrowfully having doled out to us daily by weight. We perceive now that we cannot live by bread alone, but chiefly by the Word of blessing which proceeds out of Thy mouth and by which strength is put into our food. Let the fields soon be teeming again with fruits; increase our little store of meal like that of the widow of Zarephath, and let our small supply suffice for the support of many. Meanwhile let Thy Word ever be our food, that we may derive nourishment from it; for Thy Word is the rejoicing of our hearts, our honey and honeycomb; and we shall glorify and praise Thee for this mercy as long as we live.

To Thee, our God, we fly For mercy and for grace; Oh, hear our lonely cry, And hide not Thou Thy face! O Lord, stretch forth Thy mighty hand, And guard and bless our fatherland. Amen.

HYMN.

What our Father does is well:
Blessed truth His children tell!
Though He send, for plenty, want,
Though the harvest-store be scant,
Yet we rest upon His love,
Seeking better things above.

What our Father does is well:
Shall the wilful heart rebel
If a blessing He withhold
In the field or in the fold?
Is He not Himself to be
All our store eternally?

What our Father does is well:
Though He sadden hill and dell,
Upward yet our praises rise
For the strength His Word supplies,
He has called us sons of God —
Can we murmur at His rod?

What our Father does is well:
May the thought within us dwell;
Though nor milk nor honey flow
In our barren Canaan now,
God can save us in our need,
God can bless us, God can feed.

Therefore, unto Him we raise
Hymns of glory, songs of praise;
To the Father and the Son
And the Spirit, Three in One,
Honor, might, and glory be
Now and through eternity.

The Believing Christian Prays in Time of Pestilence.

EXHORTATION.

But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord, thy God, . . . that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee. . . . The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until He have consumed thee from off the land. . . . The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish. *Deut. 28, 15, 21, 22.*

When wrath, tribulation, and anguish is come upon those that do evil, Rom. 2, 8, 9, contagious diseases and pestilence must certainly be included in that anguish. To a large extent this plague comes, (1) when men put no faith in the word of warning and admonition, Num. 14, 12; (2) when men serve God only outwardly and not with the heart, Jer. 14, 12; (3) when they even put God out of their minds entirely by their disobedience, Jer. 24, 10; 27, 9; (4) when they despise the servants of God, Jer. 29, 17; (5) when the people become bold and unruly, Ezek. 14, 19; (6) when fornication and murder are rampant, Ezek. 33, 26, 27; (7) when no admonition to repentance is any longer heeded, Amos 4, 10; (8) on account of adultery, Num. 25, 9; (9) on account of blasphemy, 2 Kings 19, 35; (10) on account of pride, 2 Sam. 24, 15; and also on account of other sins. Now, when this chastisement is inflicted by God, it is necessary that men repent, because the Lord suffers Himself to be entreated according to His mercy; hence David from among three plagues chose this one rather than the others.

PRAYER.

O Thou strong and mighty God, great is Thy wrath against wilful sinners, who will not let Thy benefactions lead them to repentance. For a time Thou dealest with men like a loving father, who seeks with much patience to draw his disobedient children to himself, but afterwards, when men wantonly abuse Thy grace, Thou manifestest Thyself as a stern Judge. We, too, are experiencing this now, O just God; we hear that in many places a con-

tagious disease has appeared, which devours many thousands of people, so that there are corpses in nearly every house, and there are not enough hands to bury them. We are consumed by Thine anger, and by Thy wrath are we troubled. Have we not strong reasons to fear that Thou wilt send this spreading contagion also into our borders and our city? O jealous God, we need not think that those on whom Thy heavy rod is now descending are sinners above the rest; rather we must confess that we all deserve to perish like them. There is found among us security, contempt of Thy Holy Word, stiff-neckedness, dissipation, fornication, unrighteousness, voluptuousness, and pride. Yea, there is scarcely any fear of God in our land; the godly man ceases, and the faithful fail from among the children of men. If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand?

O Lord, Lord, when Thou saidst, Seek ye My face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. Thou hast no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but that the sinner turn from his way and live. Therefore, we abhor ourselves and repent in dust and ashes. Do not look upon our manifold sins; graciously pronounce us not guilty; succor us in our distress, and remove all punishments from us. We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly. Command the destroying angel who is wielding the sword of vengeance to cease, and say to him, It is enough. Let us live, and we will glorify Thy name. Though we do not deserve any mercy, yet we are in need of it. Though we are all children of death, yet Thou hast

promised the penitent that Thou wouldst exercise mercy instead of justice towards them.

Oh, grant us Thy grace and life, for Jesus' sake, our only Mediator and Advocate. Have mercy, have mercy upon us, O God of mercy! Be gracious unto us; spare us, good Lord; be gracious unto us; help us, good Lord, our God. Have mercy on the poor and afflicted who have been seized with this violent pestilence, who must suffer hunger and grief, who are destitute of all nursing care, and forsaken by all men. Lead them to the knowledge of Thy grace in Christ, Thy dear Son; aid them with Thy comfort, and let Thy Spirit witness unto their spirit that they are God's children, though they may have to die of this plague. O Lord, hear our prayer; protect our fatherland, and we shall say: The Lord hath done great things for us. Yea, Thou canst deliver all who come to Thee.

What God wills, that I am willing. Can I ever say Him nay? Fire and flood His deed fulfilling Making for His feet a way. Ah! God's yea and nay shall be Ever yea and nay to me. What God wills as to correcting, That shall always be my rule. Why should pupil make objection, Sitting in the Master's school? Flesh and blood the stroke would shun, Still I say, God's will be done. What God wills when I am praying, As to measure, time, and term, I can trust e'en His delaying, That may be His glory's germ. Give He many, give He few, What have I with that to do? Amen.

HYMN.

We know not how, O God, that Thou wilt move
Thy great, eternal majesty to prove.
Not only in the sunshine of this life,
But in its darker hours, and times of strife,
E'en then we see Thy will, and humbly bend
To that which seemeth best for Thee to send.

And yet in our own weakness oft we strive
 To rise above the ills which round us thrive;
 We battle single-handed with the wrong
 That seeks to weigh us down the whole day long.
 But now at eventide we pray to Thee
 For strength to help us gain the victory.

O Father, teach us that the darker hours
 Are needed to bring forth more perfect flowers,
 Cleanse Thou our minds, and make us know aright
 That vales of darkness lead to clearer light —
 For this we humbly ask, most gracious God,
 E'en though we pass beneath Thy chastening rod.

To us, so weak, the load seems oftentimes hard,
 And, sorely pressed, we see not the reward;
 We do not try to pierce the cloud of grief,
 Or seek the hand which brings to us relief.
 But open, Lord, we pray, our sin-blind eyes
 And make us see from whence our help will rise.

Give us clean hands, a broken, contrite heart,
 That we may choose naught but the better part,
 Help us to offer unto Thee our lives
 One pure, entire, unbroken sacrifice —
 Then we may hope for glory at the last,
 When earthly trials and struggles all are past.

The Believing Christian Prays during a Conflagration.

EXHORTATION.

Behold, the Lord God called to contend by fire, and it devoured the great deep, and did eat up a part. Then said I, O Lord God, cease, I beseech Thee; by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small. The Lord repented for this: This also shall not be, saith the Lord God. *Amos 7, 4—6.*

From this passage we learn chiefly three things. In the first place, this, that God always accomplishes something when He permits calamities to befall men, and especially when He permits a

conflagration to start. Therefore the Prophet says: "The Lord God called to contend by fire." God summons fire, and hurls it upon men directly when He flings His lightnings and sets forests and houses on fire. Indirectly, however, He calls to the fire when he permits either wicked men to start it, or the impudence and carelessness of men to cause it.

Accordingly, when a Christian hears that a conflagration has broken out in the place where he lives, he says to himself: That is not happening by blind chances, but the Lord has done it; for shall there be evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it? He remembers that he, too, is under the mighty hand of God, who can visit him also on this occasion. He bows before God, and beseeches God to succor and protect him. Like a child he commits himself to God's mercy, in firm assurance that all things must work together for good to them that love God.

Furthermore, we learn from the passage cited that God frequently employs fire to chastise and punish men. For the Prophet says: He called to the fire for a punishment; it was to devour a great deep, and was already eating up a part. God punishes the sins of men, and He must punish them, not only because of His holiness, by which He resents and hates sin, but also because of His righteousness, by which He must fulfil the threats of punishment and chastening which He has pronounced against the disobedient and wicked in His Word. Moreover, God really punishes men on account of their sins, sometimes with individual, sometimes with general plagues. He visits them with individual plagues when He lays crosses and sicknesses on them, withdraws His blessing from them, and lets them suffer various kinds of distress. In such instances they have to realize and learn by experience what it means to forsake the Lord and not to be afraid of our God. But if this has no effect, He sometimes sends general plagues by which He reveals His wrath against sinners. To this end He sometimes employs fire also, and permits it to spread terror everywhere and to cause great devastation.

In this way God punishes men chiefly (1) for their contempt of preaching and His Word; (2) for their ingratitude towards Him for the great and innumerable blessings which they have received from Him, as is plainly shown by the instance recorded in Num. 11, 1; (3) for their persistent impenitence, as can be seen from what happened to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah

according to Genesis 19. Accordingly, a Christian must beware of these sins with exceptional care, lest he call down upon himself and his brethren the fiery vengeance of God. And when he hears of a conflagration that has broken out anywhere, he must regard it as a well-deserved, divine chastisement. He must remember his sins and seek to stay the chastening rod of God, lest it come down upon him also. He must let the conflagration rouse him to repentance, to amendment of his life, and to vowing and rendering new obedience to God.

Finally, we see from the passage cited before that God can be moved by earnest and eager prayer to dismiss His wrath and change it into mercy. For the Prophet says: "Then said I, O Lord God, cease, I beseech Thee. By whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small. The Lord repented for this. This also shall not be, saith the Lord God." Thus by the humble intercession of the Prophet in behalf of his people God became graciously inclined towards them, and changed His thoughts of wrath to thoughts of peace, having compassion on them and ceasing from punishing them with fire. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man still avails much. Therefore a believing Christian must resort to prayer when a conflagration has broken out. He must commit himself and his possessions to the guardian care and protection of God. He must faithfully pray both for those who are already involved in the calamity, and for those who are threatened by it. Believingly, fervently, and persistently he must sigh: O Lord, cease from Thine avenging anger, for from whom are we to expect help but from Thee? And he will surely obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

PRAYER.

Lord, Lord, Thou art an infinitely good and kind, but also a terrible God, when Thy anger has been roused, and Thou dost reveal to men Thy disfavor by Thy judgments. I do not now behold Thy gracious countenance, which I have so often and in such manifold ways beheld on other occasions. I see now that Thou art angry, and who can stand before Thine anger, and shield himself against Thy hot displeasure? From all sides I now hear tumult, cries,

wailing, and lamentation. My heart quails; my strength has forsaken me; my soul is very much frightened. A conflagration has broken out, which could not have happened without Thy will and permission.

I do not as yet know the real cause that started this sudden conflagration, but this I know for a certainty, that mine iniquities and sins and those of my brethren are the chief cause of it. These have come before Thee; these have put an end to Thy long-suffering by which Thou hast borne with us such a long time. At last Thou hast been compelled to punish us, and to show that Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with Thee.

O yes, Lord, Lord, we are sinners, great sinners, who have merited Thy wrath. We do not conceal our iniquities. We confess that we have sinned against heaven and in Thy sight, and are no more worthy to be called Thy children. We behold now before us Thy fiery indignation, and see that in a few moments Thou couldst demolish and destroy us all. But, O Lord, do not do so. Cease from Thine anger. In the midst of Thy wrath remember Thy great mercy, which Thou hast promised to them that seek Thy face. However, do not remember our sins only, but also, yea, much more, the precious and all-sufficient atoning sacrifice of Thy Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Spare us for His sake, and do not reward us according to our works. Quench the fire of Thy hot displeasure in the blood of the Lamb. O God Father, remember the death of Christ; behold His crimson wounds, which are the payment and ransom for the sins of the whole

world. That is our comfort at all times, and we hope in Thy mercy. I, too, hope in it especially in the present distress and danger, and therefore turn to Thee, my only Succor and Deliverer.

I commend to Thy gracious charge and protection, above all, my loved ones, my house, my goods, and all the gifts from Thy hands which I possess. Check the flames that they do not spread too far; let them be extinguished before they can reach my dwelling. Strengthen my faith, my trust and hope in Thy goodness, lest I lose heart, if the danger should come closer. Give me wisdom and understanding that I may conduct myself in such a manner as will redound to Thy glory and my benefit. Let the whole calamity pass by happily in the end, and I shall increasingly laud and praise Thy name, and tell what great things Thou hast done for me.

O gracious God, have mercy on those who must now behold their homes and possessions wasted and consumed by the flames. Fill their hearts with courage and comfort to hope in Thee. Be Thou their strong Shield and mighty Succor in the great affliction which has come upon them, and graciously deliver them. Care equally for those who are near the seat of danger. Command the fury of the flames to cease and not attack their dwellings. Speak the word only, and it will be done. Remember the precious promise which Thou hast made us when Thou saidst: "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord, thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior." Remember this promise, and according to Thy great mercy, do accordingly.

Bless the good efforts which are being made to

quench the fire, and let them have the desired effect. Fill all who come to the aid of the suffering with true love, tender pity, and Thy fear, that they may render their assistance and help honestly. And if evil persons should mingle with them, who intend to rob and steal, touch their heart powerfully and cause them to desist from their wicked purpose and not to grieve and injure the afflicted still more. Make a speedy end of our distress. Let order and quiet be restored within our walls. Quench the smoldering flames, and let them not break out again.

However, grant also that we may be humbled and improved by this chastisement which Thou didst decree for us, and that we may be brought to fear Thy wrath and no longer purposely act contrary to Thy commandments, but walk before Thee as long as we live in holiness and righteousness. Graciously hear this my prayer and the prayers of all other godly Christians, and send forth Thy help, and we shall praise and glorify Thee for this and all other benefits, here in time and hereafter in eternity.

When man's help and affection Shall unavailing prove, God grants me His protection, And proves His power and love; He helps me in my need, Delivers me from evil, From sin, and death, and devil, He is my Friend indeed. Amen.

HYMN.

Alas, my God! my sins are great,
My conscience doth upbraid me;
And now I find that in my strait
No man hath power to aid me.

And fled I hence, in my despair,
In some lone spot to hide me,
My griefs would still be with me there,
And peace still be denied me.

Lord, Thee I seek. I merit naught,
Yet pity and restore me;
Be not Thy wrath, just God, my lot,
Thy Son hath suffered for me.

If pain and woe must follow sin,
Then be my path still rougher.
Here spare me not; if heav'n I win,
On earth I gladly suffer.

But curb my heart, forgive my guilt,
Make Thou my patience firmer,
For they must miss the good Thou wilt
Who at Thy chastenings murmur.

Then deal with me as seems Thee best,
Thy grace will help me bear it,
If but at last I see Thy rest,
And with my Savior share it.

The Believing Christian Prays when He has Suffered by Fire.

EXHORTATION.

The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. *Job 1, 21.*

Excellent words these, which pious Job uttered when several evil tidings reached him concerning calamities that had befallen his children and his earthly possessions. One of the messages which he received ran thus: "The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them." Even this dreadful message did not terrify him, nor unsettle him. Here is an excellent example to Christians who are reduced to similar straits by a conflagration that has damaged their goods and estate. For that Christians should compare their conduct with the model conduct of godly and pious persons and should follow their example, is taught not only by Sirach, who exclaims, chap. 2, 10: "Look at the generations of old and see," but also by Paul, who writes, Romans 15, 4: "Whatsoever things

were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

Accordingly, when Christians, by the inscrutable and righteous counsel of God, are visited by misfortune, so that they must forfeit and lose much of their property, they must compose themselves and strive to order their conduct according to the example of Job. This godly man not only accepted with composure whatsoever the hand of God sent him, but he also resigned himself trustingly to the will and guidance of God.

True Christians must do likewise, and therefore observe the following duties: Their first duty is not to believe themselves forsaken by God, but to approach Him with childlike humility and call upon Him for other and renewed blessings. Their second duty is not to lose heart when they see before them a scantier supply than formerly, but to pray and labor more diligently, and at the same time believe firmly that God is able to restore to them abundantly what they have lost. Their third duty is to trust firmly in God, and to be assured that He has thousands of ways of repairing the damage which they have suffered, and that He will certainly do this in accordance with His great faithfulness after He has attained His loving objects regarding them.

If Christians act in this way, they will infallibly notice and experience that it is an easy thing for God to bless them and make them rich again, that He will remove their want, and so deal with them that in the end they will be forced to exclaim from a heart stirred to His praise: Blessed be the name of the Lord!

PRAYER.

Lord, almighty God, what a fearful thing it is to fall into Thy hands! How insufferable is Thy wrath when poured out upon men! We have now experienced this, since thou hast not only visited us with a conflagration, but hast also taken away from us a great portion of Thy former blessings. We confess frankly that we have justly merited such punishment with our sins. We confess our sins unto Thee, and our iniquity do we not hide; for we

have not made the faithful use of Thy gifts that we should. We have at times been unjust stewards; perhaps we owe Thee more than ten thousand talents. No wonder, then, that Thou hast thus chastised and punished us in Thy righteous wrath. Alas, that we have sinned so grievously! Alas, that we have so grossly insulted Thy divine majesty! We prostrate ourselves before Thee and humbly sue for mercy. We plead guilty and repent in dust and ashes. We seek Thy face; oh, let us find grace before Thee for Jesus' sake! Incline Thine ear and hear us in our pitiful weeping and wailing. Rebuke us no longer in Thine anger, neither chasten us in Thy hot displeasure, but rather be gracious unto us; for we are weak. Heal us, O Lord; for our bones are vexed. Be merciful unto us according to Thy goodness; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out our transgressions. Enter no further into judgment with Thy servants; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.

Remember that we are dust and ashes. Show us a token for good. Comfort us again after Thou hast smitten us so sorely; heal us after wounding us so severely. Restore to us by Thy blessing what the flames have devoured and reduced to ashes. Raise up compassionate and kind hearts for us that will lovingly assist and help us. Bless our calling, our labor, and the work of our hands; yea, the work of our hands, prosper Thou it for Thy name's sake. Let goodness and mercy follow us all the days of our life, and let us never feel Thy eternal wrath which we have fully merited with our sins. Make us truly cautious, lest we be careless in handling

fire and light, and cause terror and injury to our fellow-men.

However, above all, make us truly pious. Grant that the cross and suffering which we have endured may lead us to Thee and keep us with Thee until our end. Give us strength to avoid sin and to walk before Thee in newness of life. Let us rightly employ the new blessings which Thou art bestowing on us, and use them in such a way that we may be able to render a good account to Thee. Lead us at all times by Thy Spirit into the land of uprightness, and graciously bring us at last into Thy heavenly kingdom, which from the beginning Thou hast prepared for them that love Thee.

Thy Word hath said, Thou art my Rock, The Fortress that can fear no shock, My Help, my Life, my Treasure; Howe'er distress And dangers press, All must perform Thy pleasure. Amen.

HYMN.

O God, Thou righteous, faithful Lord,
I have not kept Thy holy Word,
But sinned and oft offended Thee;
Now I repent, it grieveth me.

Thou, Father, merciful and kind,
No pleasure in my death dost find,
But strong desire doth in Thee burn
That I should unto Thee return.

Since Thou, dear Father, callest me,
I, poor lost sinner, come to Thee,
Relying on Christ's precious blood
Which from His holy five wounds flowed.

I pray through Christ, Thine only Son,
Who for my good here flesh put on:
Thy love to me let never fail,
O'er justice let Thy grace prevail.

- In mercy, Father, let Thy grace
Through Jesus' blood my sins efface;
• Then I, the poor lost child, will be
From all my sins forever free.
- Grant that, according to Thy Word,
I lead a godly life, O Lord;
And let me, after time is o'er,
Inherit life forevermore.
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The Believing Christian Thanks God after Safely Passing through a Conflagration.

EXHORTATION.

Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. *Rom. 12, 15.*

This is an admonition which most earnestly enjoins upon Christians a sympathetic interest in all that happens to their fellow-men; an admonition of which they should be mindful at all times, and which they should heed especially when they see their brethren visited with conflagrations and other calamities, and behold them eating their bread with tears and mingling their drink with weeping. When they observe this, they must weep with them and share their sorrow as a sorrow which they feel with them, because they are members with them in one body. But when they see that their fellow-men are recovering, and, after passing through their anxiety, are becoming joyful again, they must join them and raise their voices in songs of joy to the honor of Him who has so gloriously helped them and done all things well.

When a fire has started, but has soon been put out, Christians must, first of all, show their sympathy to their neighbor by refusing to rejoice over the misfortune which has befallen him. They must not wish him such a misfortune, saying: Aha, that is what I like to see! For that is a proof of their malice, meanness, and want of love, which are not becoming a Christian. They must rather reflect that the fire might just as well have started with them as with their neighbors; that it might have damaged them as well as others, and they must, accordingly, show the same interest in it as if it had happened to them, and must mourn and weep with a sorrowful heart.

Furthermore, they must refrain from all uncharitable judgments; they must not forthwith pronounce the persons injured by the conflagration the greatest sinners, and regard themselves as holier and better than others; they must not boldly declare the misfortune that has befallen their neighbors to be a just punishment of their wickedness, but rather put their hand upon their mouth and say to themselves: It is the Lord's doing; and who has ever been His counselor?

Christians who have suffered no damage by the conflagration must show and prove to the fire-stricken their genuine sympathy in still other ways. They must return to the unfortunate persons anything which the latter during the conflagration had entrusted to them for safe-keeping, and not withhold the least thing; for that would be stealing, and would still more grieve those who are already aggrieved, which would be inexcusable.

Finally, they must show their sympathy also in this way, that they contribute gladly, willingly, and liberally, according to their means, towards the relief of the sufferers, if the latter request it, just as they would wish their fellow-men to do to them in a *similar* case. Thus they weep with them that weep, and share their distress and affliction. In like manner Christians must rejoice with them that do rejoice. When they see that their injured brethren take heart again, that they lift up their hearts unto God and thank Him because in their distress He was the health of their countenance and their God, they must join with them in spirit, praising and glorifying God, and must from the heart offer Him thanks for having relieved their brethren, as much as they thank Him for their own protection, and the safety and averting of injury which God vouchsafed them. If Christians do this, they discharge a duty, and that brings them nothing but favor and blessing. God is well pleased with them. He takes them under His protection. He will remember them in future troubles and deliver them. He will always let them taste and see that He is good.

PRAYER.

O holy and righteous God, Thou hast executed Thy judgment upon us for our punishment, chastisement, and improvement; Thou hast indeed manifested Thy sincerity. But Thou hast at the same

time done great things for us, so that we are forced to confess: Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are Thy judgments. I am still trembling when I think of the cries, groans, wailing, and weeping which but a short while ago filled my ears wherever I turned. I am still unable to compose myself when I recall how many parents, how many children, how many babes and sucklings, how many women with child and nursing mothers, how many sick and dying persons were in imminent danger of being devoured by the flames, how they cried to Thee in their distress, and how many thousands might have been rendered unhappy.

Thou hast indeed permitted many people to lose all they had and become poor, but amidst Thy anger Thou hast also remembered Thy mercy. Thou hast commanded the conflagration to halt and not to spread any farther. Thou hast heard the sighs of the distressed and turned Thy gracious countenance to us again, so that the violent flames have not consumed everything. What mercy and goodness! For this we give Thee praise and glory. However, we wish to praise and thank Thee especially for the great mercy which Thou hast shown to the poor on this occasion.

I am not better than my brethren; I have deserved a like punishment, but Thou hast mercifully spared me. Thou hast given me courage and comfort in the midst of trouble. Thou hast kept the fire from my dwelling; Thou hast left me and my loved ones, my goods and possessions, unscathed. Oh, how shall I sufficiently praise Thee for this? Thousand, thousand thanks be to Thee, my King, for Thy mercy! O that I had a thousand voices, A mouth

to speak with thousand tongues! My heart, which in the Lord rejoices, Then would proclaim in grateful songs To all, wherever I might be, What great things God hath done for me. But since my ability is too feeble and poor to thank Thee, O God, as the goodness and favor which Thou hast shown me require, accept my will for the deed and be pleased to accept my poor stammering.

Grant me at the same time ability and strength to consecrate my entire future life to Thee, and to make a thank-offering to Thee, that I may diligently shun sin, zealously strive after holiness, unwaveringly cling to Thee, and faithfully serve Thee until my blessed end. Thus show me Thy mercy for Jesus Christ's sake, and keep me in Thy grace, that I may enjoy it here in time and hereafter in eternity.

However, I commend to Thy special care those who have suffered by the conflagration which has now been extinguished. Raise them up with Thy divine consolations, and make them see Thy holy will. Give them patience in their affliction, and let them with true resignation cling to Thee and Thy grace. Restore to them by Thy blessing the losses which they have suffered, and give them the grace to perceive Thy fatherly love, goodness, and faithfulness towards them, and to praise and glorify Thee yonder without end.

Lord, our God, be gracious and merciful to us in the days to come. Take us into Thy sheltering protection day by day. Guard us against future danger by conflagration. Mercifully remember us at all times. Do good unto us in Thy good pleasure for Thy mercies' sake. Do good unto us till the end of

our days, and we shall offer Thee the fruit of our lips, as we are now doing, bending before Thee and saying:

Jehovah, let me now adore Thee, For where is there a God such, Lord, as Thou? With songs I fain would come before Thee; O let Thy Holy Spirit teach me now To praise Thee in His name, through whom alone Our songs can please Thee, through Thy blessed Son. O Father, draw me to my Savior, That Thy dear Son may draw me unto Thee; Thy Spirit guide my whole behavior And rule both sense and reason thus in me That, Lord, Thy peace I taste may ne'er depart, But wake sweet melodies within my heart. Amen.

HYMN.

Give to our God immortal praise!
Mercy and truth are all His ways.
Wonders of grace to God belong:
Repeat His mercies in your song.

Give to the Lord of lords renown,
The King of kings with glory crown,
His mercies ever shall endure
When lords and kings are known no more.

He built the earth, He spread the sky,
And fixed the starry lights on high.
Wonders of grace to God belong:
Repeat His mercies in your song.

He fills the sun with morning light,
He bids the moon direct the night;
His mercies ever shall endure
When suns and moons shall shine no more.

He sent His Son with power to save
From guilt and darkness and the grave;
Wonders of grace to God belong:
Repeat His mercies in your song.

Through this vain world He guides our feet,
And leads us to His heavenly seat.
His mercies ever shall endure
When this vain world shall be no more.

The Believing Christian Prays to God during a Long Period of Wet Weather.

EXHORTATION.

Behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life from under heaven; and everything that is in the earth shall die. *Gen. 6, 17.*

Thus God in olden times declared His mind to pious Noah, and revealed to him a severe judgment which He purposed to send upon the sinful world. In this way God taught him, in the first place, that the flood which was to come was caused by God alone and depended on His wisdom and power; for He said: "I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth."

He reveals to Noah, furthermore, that He intends to do this in anger on account of men's sins. Finally, God remarks that He intends to employ this flood for the punishment and destruction of sinners; for He says: "to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life, and everything that is in the earth shall die." All this happened as foretold. The Deluge came; the waters rose; all flesh perished; all that breathed and had not entered into the ark with Noah died.

This is to us a convincing proof both of God's truthfulness, according to which He fulfils most accurately all His predictions, His threats as well as His promises, and of His justice, according to which He bears indeed with the transgressions of men for a long time and overlooks them, but punishes them when they do not quit their sins and repent. And although God has promised that He will not again chastise the world with a universal flood and destroy men, although this fact is settled to all eternity, still, for the purpose of humbling and rousing sinful men to repentance, God at times sends floods, violent torrents of rain, and continuous wet weather, when the rain seems never to stop.

Now, when Christians observe these occurrences, they remember, first, that they come from God and are happening as part of His wise government. Accordingly, they commit themselves trustingly into His hand, in the firm confidence that God will do all things well.

In such visitations Christians reflect, furthermore, that God is angry with them because of their sins and disobedience. Accord-

ingly, they examine themselves and seek to know their evil ways and living, to feel sorry for it, and in genuine repentance, to seek grace and forgiveness for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Finally, Christians reflect on such occasions that they could easily tend to their ruin. They are not indifferent, but they revolve in their minds what God might do to them. This leads them to perceive readily that, if the wet season would be drawn out too long, the ground would become too soft, the fruits in the field would rot, vegetation would be destroyed, food would be lacking for men and beasts, want, famine, hunger, sickness, and ultimately, universal distress would arise. This drives them to God: they commit themselves into His hand; they cry to Him and call upon Him in their trouble; they beseech Him to avert the punishment with which they are threatened; they seek with childlike confidence the help and deliverance which they need in such days. If they do this, God will incline His heart to them again, and will become as gracious to them as He was angry before. He will have compassion on them and grant them fruitful seasons and fill their hearts with food and gladness.

PRAYER.

O God, glorious in power and majesty, Thou hast laid the foundations of the earth, and hast created all that lives and moves and has being. We see with our eyes that Thou rulest and orderest all things according to Thy pleasure. How soon Thou canst change the face of the earth! How soon Thou canst deprive it of its beauty and glory! How soon Thou canst withdraw from us the goods and blessings which Thou hadst but recently bestowed on us!

We experience this especially at this time, when Thou hast opened the windows of heaven and dost cause the rain to fall without ceasing. Everything is sad and gloomy; everything presents a disheartening appearance. The sun withholds its cheering light and warm rays. Our eyes and hearts feel oppressed because everywhere we behold dark and

heavy clouds. The earth is covered with water, grass and the fruits of the field are about to rot; the rivers are rising, and we are threatened with floods; the roads are becoming impassable, and make trade and commerce difficult; and who can tell what other damage and losses may still be caused by the calamity which has been visited upon us.

O Lord, Lord, look upon our distress, and in Thy mercy have compassion on us. Thou art now showing plainly that Thou art angry with us. And we know full well that we have roused Thy anger by our sins, our disobedience, our unfaithfulness, and our obstinacy. Indeed, we are sinners, great sinners, and utterly come short of Thy glory. We have sinned against Thee, and are not worthy to be called Thy children. We have deserved, fully deserved, that Thou shouldst withdraw Thy blessings from us and make us feel Thy displeasure instead. Accordingly, we confess our sins to Thee, and hide not our iniquity. We humble ourselves before Thee in true repentance, and pray Thee for mercy and grace.

Return to us with Thy mercy after Thou hast so keenly smitten and afflicted us. Remember us and bless us. Remember us for good. Remember that we are dust and ashes. Remember the perfect atonement of Jesus, and for His sake let mercy have sway over us instead of justice. Thou hast promised that while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, cold and heat, day and night shall not cease. Thou hast promised to satisfy the desire of every living thing on earth. Thou hast made the precious promise, no more to destroy the

earth and exterminate those that dwell on it by a flood. Remember this promise now, and fulfil it upon us, O God, plenteous in grace and truth. Shut the windows of heaven and command the rain to cease falling. Clear the murky sky, and cause the glorious sun to shine again, and dry and warm the moist earth. Give new life to the grass and all vegetation. Let everything grow again, and ripen fully, in order that in due season we may gather again with joy our needful supply of corn, wine, oil, and all that we need for our support. Grant us in future weather seasonable for our crops. Guard us against hailstorms and tempests. Give us the early and the latter rain in season, and let the cheering sun again refresh the earth now that Thou hast watered it, that grass may grow for the cattle and grain for the use of man.

However, let us also receive with gratitude the gifts which Thou hast so wonderfully preserved and so graciously bestowed on us, and let us nevermore forget what great things Thou hast done for us. Soften our hard hearts by the goodness and truth which Thou hast shown us, that we may sincerely mend our lives, shun all intentional sins, follow after godliness and righteousness, and until our end walk before Thee to Thy pleasing. At last receive us by Thy grace into Thy eternal, heavenly kingdom, after we have proved faithful. Then we shall render Thee more perfect thanks than we can show Thee in our present weakness for all the benefits which Thou hast conferred on us. Where sweetest hymns Thy saints forever raise Thee, we, too, shall praise Thee.

Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide Thee, Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see, Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee, Perfect in power, in love, and purity. Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! All Thy works shall praise Thy name, in earth, and sky, and sea; Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty! God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity! Amen.

HYMN.

Almighty Lord, before Thy throne
Thy mourning people bend;
'Tis on Thy grace in Christ alone
Our failing hopes depend.

Dark judgments, from Thy heavy hand,
Thy dreadful power display;
Yet mercy spares our guilty land,
And still we live to pray.

How changed, alas! are truths divine
For error, guilt, and shame!
What impious numbers, bold in sin,
Disgrace the Christian name!

O turn us, turn us, mighty Lord!
Convert us by Thy grace;
Then shall our hearts obey Thy Word,
And see again Thy face.

Then, should oppressing foes invade,
We will not yield to fear,
Secure of all-sufficient aid,
When God in Christ is near.

The Believing Christian Prays to God during Continuous Hot Weather and Drought.

EXHORTATION.

Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And He prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. *Jas. 5, 17, 18.*

The real aim of the holy Apostle James in placing this example of the Prophet Elijah before us was not at all to teach us that it had been at the option and the power of this prophet to procure rain for the land or to withdraw it, but rather to show us that believing, sincere, and God-pleasing prayer has very great power and can accomplish very many things. By citing this instance, the Apostle wishes to confirm and render indubitable his previous statement: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

We gather three truths from the incident which he has cited. First, that God alone is the Dispenser of rain, that He alone has power to send us rain or to withhold it. It is reserved to His will alone to open the heavens or to keep them closed. Not only does this power belong to God, as the Lord of creation, the Creator, Preserver, and Sustainer of the world, who can do whatsoever He hath pleased, and has everything under His control, but it is also emphatically ascribed to Him alone in His holy Word. For thus the Prophet Jeremiah writes, chap. 14, 22: "Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Art not Thou He, O Lord, our God? Therefore we will wait upon Thee; for Thou hast made all these things." It is God, then, who causes the moistening and drying up of the earth, wet seasons and droughts. Therefore Elijah turns to Him in prayer. Accordingly, when we see what is happening on earth, we must at all times acknowledge and humbly reverence His hand and counsel in these things. A Christian, then, must not ascribe the coming of rain or its absence to nature or fate, but to the Lord of creation. He must recognize the operation and government of God in this matter, and entirely submit to it.

The other truth is this: It is a great mercy of God when He sends rain in due season; but when He withholds it, that is a severe punishment. Elijah's prayer to God relates to both these acts. At first he prayed for the cessation of rain, in order that the people might be punished for their sins. Afterwards He prayed God to remove the punishment, to change His wrath into mercy, and to refresh the parched land again with rain. And, indeed, it is a great mercy of God when He sends rain. The soil is made soft by it, and fit to produce fruit. The seeds lying in the earth are prepared for germination and made to sprout. Fields and forests are invigorated. Men and beasts are refreshed. All nature

becomes animated, and is preserved in its glory. Hence, who would not acknowledge that rain is a true blessing which God by His grace bestows upon men? For this reason God even promises this blessing especially to men when they walk in His ways and observe His commandments to do them. For He says expressly, Deut. 11, 13—15: "It shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto My commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord, your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle that thou mayest eat and be full." However, as it is a great mercy of God when He sends the needed rain for a land, so it is, on the other hand, a grievous and severe punishment when He withholds rain, and smites a land with drought and a season of hot weather. God permits this punishment to overtake men when they sin against Him, and do not walk in His commandments. This punishment is as just as it is severe and sharp. For how wretched and pitiable everything looks when the rain fails, and heat and drought become oppressive! The earth cracks, and has no power to produce its plants. The meadows become like deserts; the trees decay; the fruits drop; the cattle thirst; men languish. Famine, want, sicknesses, and pests easily arise; in the midst of summer the entire land looks as if it had been robed in a shroud. What a melancholy sight! What a keenly felt punishment! When we behold and feel it, we must not remain indifferent, but rather commune with our own heart, acknowledge our transgressions, with a humble and penitent heart seek reconciliation with God through Christ Jesus, and in a contrite spirit call upon Him for lightening to us His just punishment and for turning it away altogether.

The third truth is this: Sincere and God-pleasing prayer is the surest means of obtaining from God every blessing, also this favor, that He removes our punishment and refreshes and saturates the parched land with a blessed rain. The example of Elijah shows this. He was indeed a prophet of the Lord, but in other respects a man, a sinful mortal, a powerless and feeble man, as we are. He prayed, and God granted his request. He prayed in accordance with God's will and good pleasure, and was heard. We can obtain the like good fortune. We can have the same blessing; for with

God there is no respect of persons. Whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted with Him. Whoever asks anything according to His will is heard. Accordingly, when Christians see that God has extended His hand to punish them, when they see that He withholds rain from them and visits them with a hot season and drought, they must have recourse to prayer, and offer their prayer in such a manner that it must come before God and be a sweet savor to Him. They must pray, sincerely acknowledging their sins, seeking forgiveness of them by faith in Christ Jesus, banishing even the least doubt from their hearts while they pray, and never becoming slack, but persevere in prayer, until the desired help has been vouchsafed them. Then they may rest assured that God will hear them and give them the desire of their heart. Then they will soon behold the fulfilment of their request; for the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him; He will also hear their cry and save them.

PRAYER.

O Lord, our God, Thou art gracious and merciful, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth. Help us now in the great distress in which we come before Thee to implore Thy mercy. Help us in this great affliction which has befallen us. Help us and graciously deliver us from it. Thou hast threatened Thy people aforetime that, if they would not obey Thy voice and not live according to Thy commandments and statutes, Thou wouldst make the heavens above them brass and the earth beneath their feet iron, give them dust and ashes instead of rain for their land, and punish them even to the point of destroying them from the earth. Thou art now beginning to fulfil this just and terrible threat also upon us. For some time Thou hast visited us with continuous hot weather and a drought that withers everything. For quite a while Thou hast really shut up the heavens

against us and commanded the clouds either to fly past us or to give us no rain. It seems indeed as if the heaven above us had become brass and the earth beneath us iron. How sad and pitiable everything looks in fields and meadow, on the mountains and in the valleys, in the fruit-gardens and vineyards, yea, everywhere! The earth gapes and groans to be refreshed. Men and beasts pant from the great heat; the trees are drying up; the grass is withering; nowhere the fruits are able to thrive and mature. The cattle lack fodder, and our rivers, brooks, and wells must finally become dry, and we shall have to suffer a water-famine. What sad consequences may not rise from this condition!

O Lord, Lord, behold our distress and make an end of it. We must indeed acknowledge before Thy holy countenance that we have fully merited such grievous punishments with our persistent disobedience toward Thy commandments, with our base ingratitude for Thy many blessings, and with our appalling misuse of the bounties which Thou hast bestowed upon us. Yea, we are forced to confess that Thou wouldst do us no wrong at all if Thou wouldst afflict us with much more grievous punishments for our manifold transgressions. But, O Father of mercy, behold, we prostrate ourselves before Thee crushed and humbled, and pray Thee to forgive our grievous sins and to turn Thy gracious countenance to us again. Have compassion on us, and at last turn this severe affliction from us. It is Thou that doest so much good unto men, that givest us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, and fillest our hearts with food and gladness. Thou waterest the hills from Thy chambers; the earth is satisfied

with the fruit of Thy works. Thou causest grass to grow for the cattle and herb for the service of man, that Thou mayest bring forth food out of the earth. Therefore the eyes of all wait upon Thee, and Thou givest them their meat in due season. Remember us now for Thy name's sake, and refresh us with a fructifying and penetrating rain. O Thou almighty Creator and Preserver of all things, open the windows of heaven, visit the earth again that is panting for Thy bounty; water it that the fruits in our farms, orchards, and vineyards may ripen; that the plants in the fields may grow, and grass come up in our meadows, so that men and beasts everywhere may again find their food and sustenance.

O God, though we have hitherto been disobedient children, nevertheless we are Thy children, reconciled to Thee by Christ. Therefore we humbly call upon Thee for His sake, graciously to hear our sighings and supplications in this our urgent and persistent need. Gladden every living thing with water from above. Protect our country and our homes also in the future from contagious diseases, famine, and other merited chastisements. Let the punishments which we have now experienced serve for our improvement and our sincere conversion to Thee. To that end let Thy Spirit enter our hearts and make us entirely different people — people who faithfully walk in Thy ways, and observe Thy commandments to do them. Sanctify us wholly through Him, that our whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. O Lord, our God, we hope in Thy goodness; let us live before Thee and spread abroad Thy praise. Hear our prayer, and we shall be

heartily thankful for Thy mercy, and shall highly exalt Thy name as long as we live, here in time and hereafter in eternity. Hear us, dear Father in heaven; for Thou only art our God. Hear us according to Thy faithfulness which has no end, and according to which Thou hast promised us succor and help in every trouble. Hear us for Thine own sake.

Abide with Thy protection Among us, Lord, our Strength,
Lest world and Satan fell us, And overcome at length. Abide,
O faithful Savior, Among us with Thy love, Grant steadfastness,
and help us To reach our home above. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

If any be distressed, and fain would gather
Some comfort, let him haste unto
Our Father;
For we of hope and help are quite bereaven,
Except Thou succor us
Who art in heaven.
Thou showest mercy, therefore for the same
We praise Thee, singing,
Hallowed be Thy name.
Of all our miseries cast up the sum;
Show us Thy joys, and let
Thy kingdom come.
We mortal are, and alter from our birth;
Thou constant art,
Thy will be done on earth.
Thou madest the earth, as well as planets seven;
Thy name is blessed here
As 'tis in heaven.
Nothing we have to use our debts to pay,
Except Thou give it us;
Give us this day
Wherewith to clothe us, wherewith to be fed
For without Thee we want
Our daily bread.

We want, but want no faults, for no day passes
But we do sin —

Forgive us our trespasses.

No man from sinning ever free did live;

Forgive us, Lord, our sins,

As we forgive.

If we repent our faults, Thou ne'er disdain'st us;

We pardon them

That trespass against us;

Forgive us that is past, a new path tread us,

Direct us always in Thy faith,

And lead us —

Us, Thine own people and Thy chosen nation —

Into all truth, but

Not into temptation.

Thou that of all good graces art the Giver,

Suffer us not to wander,

But deliver

Us from the fierce assaults of world and devil,

And flesh, so shalt Thou free us

From all evil.

To these petitions let both church and laymen,

With one consent of heart and voice, say Amen.

STARCK'S
MOTHERHOOD PRAYERS
for All Occasions

From the German Edition of Dr. F. Pieper

Translated and Edited

by

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PREFACE.

What our faithful and kind God has promised to all believers, *viz.*, that He will protect, aid, and care for them, and hear their prayers, Christian women living in holy matrimony may expect from Him, especially at a time when God has blessed them and made them fruitful mothers. Nobody will ever disprove of the Psalmist's words, who says: "Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is His reward." Godly women accept this statement, as can be seen by the example of Sarāh, Rebekah, Rachel, and other holy women, who, when they perceived that God had made them fruitful, praised Him for it with all their heart.

When godly women in their married life become aware of the blessing which God has accorded them, the ardent wish arises in their hearts that their hidden fruit may be ushered into the light of day unharmed and well formed. With their pious mind they turn to the Lord, confidently trusting that the almighty and kind Creator will hear their prayers. As the time of their delivery draws near, they increase the fervor of their prayers to Him who is able to do all things, and await His fatherly help. And when God has heard their prayer of faith, and they behold the healthy child to which they have given birth, they praise the gracious providence of their faithful God with heart and lips.

In this book Christian married women will find sufficient instruction (which, assuredly, they desire!) how they may conduct themselves in a true Christian spirit both during the time of their pregnancy and in childbirth. May the faithful God gladden with His blessing all godly hearts that call upon His all-embracing mercy in humble resignation, by hearing their prayers.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, by Thy holy birth Thou hast sanctified our sinful birth. Aid all those who call upon Thee in their hour of need with Thy mighty grace. Help them, refresh them, comfort them, gladden them. Come to them when human help is too feeble to aid them. Behold, their heart is sighing unto Thee, their lips are quivering, and their eyes are turned to Thy sanctuary. Speak to their heart the comforting assurance: "I am with thee in trouble, to deliver thee; fear not; I am at Thy side." Then they shall sound abroad Thy glory, and say: The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad; the name of the Lord be praised now and forevermore. Amen.

Meditations for Women with Child.

The Woman with Child at Her Morning Devotion.

EXHORTATION.

Every Christian, before going to his work in the morning, ought to commit himself to the gracious protection of God, and ought to pray God to keep his body and his soul under His sheltering mercy. It is certainly a great blessing of God when a person rises in good health in the morning, spends the day in good health with the aid of the most high God, and retires in good health at night. That this is a special blessing of God we realize when we observe that many a one has been well in the morning, but lies sick at eventide, or has met with misfortune during the day so that he had to be put to bed, lame, wounded, or with mangled limbs.

However, if every person ought to commit himself to the guardian care of God, how much more ought women expecting to become mothers do this! Every morning such women should diligently and eagerly call upon God (1) to keep them in holy and good thoughts throughout the day, that they may have their mind upon God, have Him always in their hearts, and hold converse with Him.

(2) They should also commend their life and limbs to God, asking Him to guard their steps and preserve them from a dangerous fall or other injury.

(3) Nor should they weary of commending the fruit of their womb to the holy providence of God, that it may grow, and become strong and well formed.

(4) However, in particular, they should be careful during the day not to become angry or involved in quarrel and strife. They should not be punctilious or easily offended, lest by their self-will and anger they bring misfortune, sickness, or even death upon their unborn child.

If they resign themselves thus to the goodness and mercy of God, they have the consolation that God will give His angel charge over them to keep them in all their ways.

MORNING PRAYER.

Lord God Father, what Thou hast created, Lord God Son, what Thou hast redeemed, Lord God Holy Spirit, what Thou hast sanctified, I commit to Thy hands. Praise, honor, glory, and thanks be to Thy holy name in this morning hour and forevermore. Amen.

O gracious, kind, and merciful God, who art Thyself the Light with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, I thank Thee from my inmost heart that Thou hast graciously kept me during this dark night and hast again permitted me to behold the gladdening light of morning. O Thou Light of my soul, shine into my heart this morning that I may be strengthened in love of Thee and in my confidence and hope. Sanctify my soul, that I may converse with Thee this day, have my mind on Thee, rejoice in Thee, and find comfort in Thy mercy.

Grant that I may not sin intentionally against Thee this day, but serve Thee and walk before Thee in the holiness and righteousness of the children of God. Make me to realize Thy most holy presence, and to be aware that Thou art about me all the time, hearing everything that I say, and seeing everything that I do, in order that by this consciousness I may be the more encouraged to persevere in holiness, and not to offend Thee.

I also commend to Thee my body and life, my walking about, my every step. O God of all goodness and grace, Thou hast now placed me in a peculiar state, in which I need Thy peculiar protection and aid. Therefore I humbly pray and beseech Thee, O Thou Protector of Thy children, to preserve my going out and my coming in. Let Thy mercy guide me; let Thy angel lead me by the hand, that I may not suffer some hurtful slip or fall by which I may injure a limb and at the same time the fruit of my womb. Guard me, strengthen me, preserve me. Drive far from me whatever is harmful to me. Let Thy good Spirit lead me in an even path. Let me live to see the evening under Thy protection, when I shall joyfully thank Thee again for all the benefits which Thou hast graciously shown me in body and soul.

The Lord bless me and keep me; the Lord make His face shine upon me, and be gracious unto me; the Lord lift up His countenance upon me, and give me peace. The mercy of the Father

protect me; the love of Jesus cover me; the succor of the Holy Spirit preserve me now and at all times.

If Thou dwell within me, Evil far must go, And I shall be tasting Bliss that angels know. Always in Thy keeping, Jesus Savior, dear, Whether waking, sleeping, Thine I am fore'er. Amen.

HYMN.

In all my ways, O God,
I would acknowledge Thee;
And seek to keep my heart and house
From all pollution free.

Where'er I have a tent,
An altar will I raise;
And thither my oblations bring
Of humble prayer and praise.

Could I my wish obtain,
My household, Lord, should be
Devoted to Thyself alone,
A nursery for Thee.

The Woman with Child at Her Evening Devotion.

EXHORTATION.

Oh, what a great favor it is when God permits a person to live through an entire day until the evening without a misfortune, and the person can retire to his rest, saying: I lay me down and sleep in perfect peace! What a glorious rest is his who retires at night in peace with God, in peace with his own conscience, in peace and comfort of body! Such a person can say to the praise of the Triune God: The Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad. And when he falls asleep thus, with a grateful heart and the praise of God on his lips, the remainder of his nightly rest will also be blessed by God.

In the same manner, too, women with child should lift up their hearts, their eyes, and their lips to God when they have completed the day without misfortune. They should thank God for having graciously preserved and protected them, and should commend themselves to His love and mercy.

If the saying that night is no man's friend is true, it applies especially to women with child. Accordingly, they should call upon God, (1) to avert from them all manner of frightful accidents, because women with child may be exposed to the gravest dangers by a sudden terror; (2) to preserve them from sickness and pain; (3) to spread His sheltering wings continually over them and the fruit of their womb.

With the dawn of the new day they should (4) appear before God with praises on their lips and say with David: Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.

EVENING PRAYER.

Gracious, loving, and merciful God, with joyful heart I come before Thy most holy countenance. How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. Yes, under the shadow of Thy wings I have gone out and come in to-day: I have been sheltered beneath them; no harm has touched me, and I have now safely reached the evening. Blessed be the love of my heavenly Father, who has borne me on His arms as His child. Blessed be Jesus Christ, my Savior, who has guided me with His hand, so that no misfortune has moved me. Blessed be God the Holy Spirit, who has not departed from me.

O Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, abide with me also this night. Continue Thy loving-kindness unto them that know Thee, and Thy righteousness to the upright in heart. Guard my body and my soul against every accident. Let me continually commune with Thee while sleeping, in order that on awaking I may still be with Thee. Behold, I know of no helper except Thee only, Thou God of Israel. Let Thy angel be at my side and keep watch at my bed, that nothing may harm me, and that which Thou hast graciously entrusted to me. Drive from my heart all unnecessary cares, evil thoughts, and false imaginations. Drive from my bed and my home whatever might bring me misfortune.

Thus I now lay me down in the name of God. I sleep in the arms of my Jesus; His left hand is under my head, and His right hand covers me. O my Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, be and abide with me! O Triune God, Thou art my Light and my Salvation; whom shall I fear? Thou art the Strength of my life;

of whom shall I be afraid? No; I am not afraid of anything, for God is with me; I fear nothing, because I have Jesus with me. When it is dark around me, Jesus is the Light of my soul. When I am growing afraid, the Holy Spirit is my Consolation and Support.

Let this night pass safely for me under Thy protection, in order that, delivered, gladdened, guarded, and preserved by Thee, I may again behold the cheering sunlight, and my lips shall praise Thee with joy and thank Thee for all Thy benefits. As often as my pulse beats this night, my spirit shall embrace Thee; as often as my heart stirs, this shall be my desire, that I may loudly proclaim everywhere: O Jesus, Jesus, Thou art mine, and I am and remain Thine. Thus I shall now go to sleep, O Jesus, in Thy arms. Thy guardian care shall be my cover, Thy mercy my couch, Thy breast my pillow, and the delights which flow from Thy Word and which Thy Spirit sheds in my heart shall be my dream. Amen.

HYMN.

O Lord, who knowest every need of mine,
 Help me to bear each cross, and not repine;
 Grant me fresh courage every day,
 Help me to do my work alway
 Without complaint!

O Lord, Thou knowest well how dark the way,
 Guide Thou my footsteps, lest they stray;
 Give me fresh faith for every hour,
 Lest I should ever doubt Thy power,
 And make complaint!

Give me a heart, O Lord, strong to endure,
 Help me to keep it simple, pure;
 Make me unselfish, helpful, true
 In every act, whate'er I do,
 And keep content!

Help me to do my woman's share,
 Make me courageous, strong to bear
 Sunshine or shadow in my life;
 Sustain me in the daily strife
 To keep content!

Daily Meditation of a Woman with Child.

When God causes a married woman to become aware that she is to receive the blessing of motherhood, she should rejoice in her heart and thank God for it. But she should reflect at the same time (1) that in her condition she will experience many pains, many discomforts, and many hardships, of which she knew nothing and which she did not experience while she was single. These pains God has laid on womankind after the Fall, as we read Gen. 3, 16: "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children."

However, since these pains come from God and are a reminder of sin, Christian wives should reflect (2) that God is gracious for Christ's sake, and soothes every pain; that He is a mighty God, who can remove all pains; yea, that since all things work together for good to them that love God, also the hardships which pregnancy entails must serve in many ways for the edification of women with child and for their training in Christianity: they can learn to understand the holiness, wisdom, goodness, omnipotence, help, and blessing of God, which they could not have learned as well outside of the estate of wedlock.

In an hour of pain, during a sleepless night, or when meeting with a troublesome accident, they should (3) remember that by virtue of their baptismal covenant God is their Father, and will not forsake them, because they are His children; yea, that like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. They should keep their mind on the power of God, who will give them strength to complete the good work and usher into the light of day the good work which He has begun in them. If at times their burden seems so great that they imagine they cannot bear up under it, they should remember that with God nothing is impossible, and that if He speaks but a word, the proud waves of our affliction and misery must subside. (4) However, if the pains continue a long time, they should not lose heart on that account, nor permit their hope to quail, but should remind themselves that God has already appointed the hour when He will help them. Frequently He says to us, as He did to His mother Mary: "Mine hour is not yet come." Therefore we must believingly and patiently bear the delay of the divine help, and trust in the divine promise: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

Do you say: Many have lost their lives during pregnancy and in labor? I answer: God has appointed every one the hour when he shall die. While women with child may recall instances of wives who died during pregnancy and in labor, they may also behold many instances of women being safely delivered and becoming happy mothers; yea, the number of those whom the Lord has delivered and helped as they wished to be is far greater than the number of those who died in this state. But if out of a hundred scarcely one has died, and ninety-nine have had a safe delivery, it is contrary to faith and to the love of God always to anticipate the worst. It is distrust of God and a grievous sin to despair of God's help and to say: Although God has helped many hundreds, yea, thousands, still He will not help me. Who has put this distrust into your minds? Is it possible that you do not know the goodness and almighty power of God at all? Therefore, invert your argument and say: God, who has helped so many thousands, will help and aid me also. On this place your reliance with all your heart; contradict your doubting thoughts, and look rather to the mighty and strong hand of God.

Let us suppose, however, that God has appointed for a woman with child that she is to die during her pregnancy or labor; still she would die saved because she would die in her calling. Just as it is a blessed death for a pious Christian to die during prayer, for a preacher to die in the pulpit, for a person to die while dispensing alms, for a king to die on his throne while rendering a righteous decision in behalf of a poor man, so it is a blessed death for a wife to breathe her last during pregnancy and labor, for she dies in her calling, in a God-pleasing state. The death of such pious wives is precious in the sight of the Lord, and after their suffering and pains He will satisfy and refresh them with bliss in the eternal joy of heaven. However, how to die saved, and when to die saved, is a matter that we must commit to the wisdom of God. A believing soul should say: "If only I die saved and go to heaven, the Lord may do as He pleases, and ordain any manner and any hour for my death."

However, women with child should also control themselves, so as not to cause their own death by their anger and stubbornness. For, since anything may prove hurtful to them in their condition, they should exercise the greater caution. It is not to be praised at all in many women with child, but rather to be reproved, that during the time of their pregnancy they are too hot-tempered,

malicious, and sensitive. They are pleased with nothing that the members of their family do; they fret over everything; no food that is brought them, not a word that is spoken to them, not a chair in which they sit down is to their liking. In these things they must practise moderation and pray God for help to overcome their ill temper. For if they stir up their gall by such angry and bitter feelings, dangerous weaknesses, violent fevers, and other things may ensue, and they will not be able to say: These ills God has sent me, but will have to say: I have inflicted this on myself! and it is not their pregnancy, but their evil disposition, their temper and self-will that causes their death.

Yea, I would ask all Christian wives to consider if the fruit of their womb must grow and increase in such embittered blood, and finally be born from such an embittered mother, whether they are not to blame for the fact that the children which they have born are ill-disposed, spiteful, stubborn, manifesting the same stubborn mind which their mothers manifested during pregnancy. Accordingly, a Christian wife must conquer herself in this respect and resign herself to God, lest by her own fault she bring upon herself death and unfortunate birth. If they call upon God for grace, He from whom every good gift cometh down will not deny them this grace; yea, then they can take comfort in God whether they live or die. And since Christian wives while in this state love to go to Communion, they have the greater reason to commit themselves and the fruit of their womb to the Lord Jesus and in His strength to abide in faith, in love, in sanctification, and in self-discipline.

PRAYER.

Holy, kind, and merciful God, I come before Thee bringing my petitions, prayers, supplications, and thanksgiving. O great God, Thou hast bestowed on me the blessing of motherhood, for which I thank Thee from my inmost heart. I pray Thee, grant me in due time the gladdening sight of my child. However, O just God, since Thou hast laid upon this state many pains and discomforts, I willingly assume them with Thy help. If, therefore, hours of sadness, days of pain, sleepless nights are in store for me, O Lord, my God, do not leave me.

I know that by Thy almighty power Thou canst mitigate all my sufferings. In the midst of my sufferings and pain Thou art

still my Father, my Support, my Helper in need, my only Refuge, and my gracious God. Thou who hast ordained and laid upon me these pains hast also the might and power to assuage them. If my discomforts and worries should become too great and numerous, yea, almost unendurable, still I shall not grow faint-hearted, but remember, O faithful God, that Thou wilt not suffer me to be tempted above that I am able, but wilt with the temptation also make a way of escape that I may be able to bear it. When I am sighing: Oh, how long, how long must my heart be in anguish, yearning for Thee? remember the hour when Thou hast decided to help me, and according to Thy gracious will let it come soon.

Place before my eyes, O God, Thy almighty power; yea, write it into my heart, that I may not become frightened when I see other women in the same state with me suffering grievous illness, yea, even losing their lives during labor. In such moments let the fact be firmly graven upon my mind that every year so many hundreds of wives are safely delivered, and that only the smallest number of them are asked by Thee to surrender their lives during labor. Therefore I shall trust in Thy almighty power and grace, and humbly beseech Thee to make me a happy mother. Help me in the hours of labor, and gladden my heart with the sight of a healthy and well-formed child. But if Thou hast decreed the end of my life in this state, Lord, let Thy will be done! I know that in that case I shall die in my calling; I shall die in Thy grace, acquired for me by Christ; I shall die in Thy arms; I shall die as Thy child; I shall die in peace, and Thou wilt usher me into the joy and bliss everlasting.

Meanwhile, O my God, grant me Thy Holy Spirit that He may keep me in good thoughts. Give me a quiet and meek spirit, lest by anger and spite I cause death to myself and the fruit of my womb. Grant that I may moderate my ill temper and not lose my life by my own fault. Let the fruit of my womb be endowed with good powers of body and mind; let it grow sheltered by Thy grace until Thou wilt usher it into the light of day, and thus turn all my pains into bliss and all my sadness into joy.

O Lord, my God, I have poured out my heart before Thee; hear me according to Thy goodness; deliver me according to Thy promise; have mercy on me according to Thy faithfulness; help me according to Thy love; gladden me according to Thy grace.

I know that Thou hast never yet forgotten me, and I have no reason to let grief devour my heart. In the midst of trouble I remember God; He will apportion my pain according to my strength. By Thy Spirit I shall overcome, visit again Thy sanctuary, to praise, thank, and magnify Thee, who wilt bind myself to Thee with bonds of everlasting love. Amen.

HYMN.

In the secret of His presence how my soul delights to hide!
Oh, how precious are the lessons which I learn at Jesus' side!
Earthly cares can never vex me, neither trials lay me low,
For when Satan comes to tempt me, to the secret place I go.

When my soul is faint and thirsty, 'neath the shadow of His wing,
There is cool and pleasant shelter and a fresh and crystal spring;
And my Savior sits beside me as we hold communion sweet:
If I tried, I could not utter what He says when we thus meet.

Only this I know; I tell Him all my doubt and griefs and fears;
Oh, how patiently He listens, and my drooping soul He cheers!
Do you think He ne'er reproves me? What a false friend He
would be,
If He never, never told me of the sins which He must see.

Do you think that I could love Him half so well, or as I ought,
If He did not plainly tell me of my sinful deed and thought?
No, He is so very faithful, and that makes me trust Him more,
For I know that He does love me, though He wounds me very sore.

Would you like to know the sweetness of the secret of the Lord?
Go and hide beneath His shadow, and this shall be your reward.
And when you leave the silence of the special meeting-place,
You must mind and bear the image of your Master in your face.

You will surely lose the blessing and the fulness of your joy
If you let dark clouds distress you and your inward peace destroy.
You may alway be abiding, if you will, at Jesus' side,
In the secret of His presence you may every moment hide.

The Woman with Child Reflects on Her God-pleasing State.

EXHORTATION.

God Himself has instituted wedlock and by means of it wishes to propagate the human race. Accordingly, He said to our first parents in Paradise: "Be fruitful and multiply." This being so, a godly wife must rejoice in God when she becomes aware of her fruitfulness. She should reflect (1) that children are a gift of God which He bestows on some and withholds from others, lest men should ascribe anything in this matter to their own power.

As soon as a wife becomes aware of this blessing of God, she should (2) consider that God has remembered her in mercy, as it is written concerning Sarah and Rachel: "And the Lord visited Sarah," and: "The Lord remembered Rachel." Next, she should (3) be content, thank God, and believe that her present condition is in accordance with God's will, who has bestowed this blessing upon her. In all her going out and coming in she should remember that she is in God's company and under His protection, and that God's holy angels exercise special care over her.

But if she is visited with pains and discomforts, she should (4) consider that God has ordained her for this state and for that reason will not forsake her, and that hence she must place her trust in Him all the more, because then she will realize the glorious working of the Lord. To that end she should (5) persevere in prayer, be careful not to grow angry or wrathful, persevere in faith, in the love of Jesus, and true godliness, and be assured that she is in a blessed and God-pleasing state, in which she may comfort herself with the aid and help of God, and that whatever she asks in this state in accordance with God's will God will graciously give her according to His mercy.

PRAYER.

O loving God and Father, how can I sufficiently acknowledge, praise, and extol Thy fatherly faithfulness that Thou hast called and placed me into my present state? Lord, Thou hast remembered me in mercy, and hast made me to obtain this gift and fruit of wedlock. If my present state is irksome, I know nevertheless that I am in Thy grace and that my state is well pleasing to Thee and

ordained by Thee. Thou knowest, Lord, that I have not desired any man from frivolous thoughts, that I endeavored to keep my soul unspotted from all evil lust, and that I have not kept company with unchaste and frivolous persons. I have, however, consented to take a husband in Thy fear, in chaste love, and for Thy glory.

Now that Thou hast mercifully remembered me also, and hast bestowed on me the fruit of the womb, I accept it as a gift from Thy hand. Let Thy mercy be accorded me in this state, and be a gracious God to me in this state, who hears my prayers and supplications, and permit my sighing to reach Thy throne of grace. Be in this state my Companion, to protect, accompany, and guard me. Be in this state my Consolation, when I am visited with sadness, and give me Thy joyful Spirit that He may witness to me at all times that I am Thy child. Be in this state my Refuge, and let me pour out my heart to Thee; cheer me when I am despondent, and refresh me when I am faint. Be in this state my Helper, and assure me, saying: I am with thee in trouble to deliver thee. Be in this state my Succor when I am in pain, suffering, and discomfort. Be in this state my Deliverer, who loosens the bonds in due time, gives me a safe delivery, and rejoices my heart.

O Heavenly Father, be my Strength in this state; support, preserve, strengthen, and refresh me. O Jesus, be in this state my Advocate, who intercedes for me with God and carries my feeble prayer, often breathed amid much pain, to God. O God Holy Spirit, be in this state my Comforter, who assures me that God's favor is resting upon me, that I am a child of God, and certifies to me gracious help and a safe delivery. Yes, be with me, O Triune God, in this state, and I shall be richly blessed, well protected, guarded, and delivered. Lord Jesus, guide me wherever I go, that I may walk in accordance with Thy will to the end of my life. Preserve my body and soul; grave me upon Thy hands; do not let me fall. Give me a holy impulse to meditate upon Thy wounds every hour, and to regard the world as naught. Amen.

HYMN.

How sweet the joy that fills the soul,
When, after silent waiting long
For answer to the pleading prayer,
The sigh becomes triumphant song!

All darkened hours of trial time,
When we had thought our prayers unheard,
Our God was listening to our cry,
And answering still our pleading word.

In His own time, in His own way,
He comes with blessing, surest, best,
Drawing the soul that on Him waits,
In sacred nearness to His rest.

Prayers which we thought unanswered may,
Like incense, still ascend to heav'n,
And to the patient, waiting soul
The sweetest blessing may be giv'n.

The Woman with Child Thanks God for Her Fruitfulness.

EXHORTATION.

Although most men think children a product of nature, Holy Scripture teaches us to regard them differently when it says: "Behold, the fruit of the womb is His reward." Accordingly, believing spouses must pray God for this gift as well as for other gifts. As regards whores and other unbelieving persons, it is true that they obtain this gift because God allows nature to take its course, and permits them to beget children, not for the glory of God, but in a gratification of their sinful lust. But the case is different as regards believing and godly spouses: they receive their children gratefully as a gift of God.

Accordingly, when a pious wife becomes aware of her fruitfulness, she should (1) thank God for it, and call to mind that God bestowed also upon her the blessing which He has promised to bestow on wedlock. Next, she should (2) be careful in her conduct, keeping herself within the bounds of moderation, decency, meekness, and Christian modesty, lest by her own fault she destroy her fruitfulness by excessive work, thoughtless movements, reckless lifting and carrying of burdens, malicious anger, and other wanton acts.

(3) When she observes that her fruitfulness is increasing, she

should daily commit herself and the fruit of her womb to God, and call upon Him that He would Himself form, preserve, strengthen, keep, and in due time safely usher it into the light of day. (4) She should not only forbear grumbling over the discomforts of her state, but also avoid outbursts of a hot temper, anger, and revengefulness towards her husband, her servants, and other persons, for that would be a sign of impatience at her fruitfulness, and consequently an act of ingratitude, which God surely sees and notes and can visit upon persons.

PRAYER.

Lord, almighty God, who art a God of life and givest life and breath to all of us, Thou hast blessed the state of wedlock with fruits of the body. I thank Thee that Thou hast remembered me also and hast made me share the blessing of my married state. Thou almighty Lord hast shown to me a greater favor than to others, who are sighing for this gift and do not obtain it; therefore I pray Thee, let me consider well how greatly Thou hast favored me.

I commit myself entirely to Thee. Guard me against fear and terror, against falling and dangers, against mishaps and anything that might deprive me of the pledge Thou hast placed in my keeping. Train me to exercise Christian caution in walking and at my work, in order that I may not destroy what Thy hand has bestowed upon me. O Lord, how great is Thy wisdom in forming men so wonderfully! How great is Thy almighty power in bringing them forth into the light of day! How great is Thy goodness in thus preserving and increasing the human race! I thank Thee, my God, that Thou hast appointed me also to be an instrument for this glorious work of Thine, and by Thy divine blessing hast made me fruitful.

Oh, finish gloriously by Thy grace the work which Thou hast begun; preserve what Thou hast given me; strengthen what Thou hast entrusted to me, guard what Thou hast bestowed on me. Let me safely pass my appointed time under Thy protection. Let no deformity come within my sight, and no awful message to my ears; and if this should happen nevertheless according to Thy counsel, guard my fruit by Thine almighty hand. Let me in due time become a happy mother and look with joy upon what is still hidden. Lord, let Thy goodness and faithfulness accompany me in all my ways: keep my foot from stumbling, my limbs from being

broken, and my body from being injured. Preserve the gift with which Thou hast blessed me, and let it be committed unto Thee.

Meanwhile I will look for Thy help; I lift up mine eyes unto the hills whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. I will praise the Lord at all times; His praise shall be continually in my mouth. In the morning, at noon, and at night I will thank the Lord for all His benefits.

Praise to the Lord, who doth visibly bless and defend thee; Who, from the heavens, the streams of His mercy doth send thee; Ponder anew What the Almighty can do, If with His love He befriend thee. Amen.

HYMN.

Thou Maker of our mortal frame —
Of all Thy works the noblest far,
We bow before Thy righteous claim
To all we have, and all we are.

Our tongues were fashioned for Thy Word,
Our hands, to do Thy will divine;
Our bodies are Thy temple, Lord,
The mind's immortal powers are Thine.

Its highest thought — to trace Thy skill,
Its purest love on Thee to rest,
Its noblest action of the will
To choose Thy service, and be blest.

Our ransomed spirits rise to Thee —
Unfailing source of light and joy!
Thy love has made Thy children free,
Thy praise shall life and strength employ.

Give grace and mercy to the end —
For we are Thine and not our own:
So shall we to Thy courts ascend,
And cast our crowns before Thy throne.

The Woman with Child Commends Herself and the Fruit of Her Womb to God.

EXHORTATION.

When a godly wife becomes aware of the blessing of her fruitfulness, she has the following things to do, aside from her ordinary work :

(1) She should diligently commend herself to God every day and hour, asking Him to accompany, strengthen, and guard her.
(2) She should diligently commend to God and constantly offer up in her prayer to Him the fruit of her womb. For this is the difference between Christian wives and unbelievers, between godly wives and frivolous whores: unbelievers and whores curse their pregnancy, do not esteem the fruit of their womb, do not thank God for it, harm it if they can, and are not well disposed towards it. But godly wives are minded differently: They never pray without offering up their child to God. They call upon Him to give it a well-formed body, as well as healthy and fair limbs, to preserve its life, and let it be safely born. They love the fruit of their womb before they see it, they are careful to have it well preserved, and prepare clothes for swaddling it after its birth. Yea, they do not only provide for its physical well-being, but they also call upon God to let their fruit after its physical birth obtain the new birth through Holy Baptism.

PRAYER.

O holy Father and Creator of all men, behold, I come before Thy most holy countenance and humbly beseech Thee for a favor. O great God, according to Thy goodness Thou hast blessed me with a fruit of the womb; but who am I that I should bring it into this world? How many mothers have conceived children, but not given birth to them! How many were joyfully anticipating beholding a living fruit, but did not obtain their wish!

Therefore, O Lord, Lord, all my desire is before Thee, and my groaning is not hid from Thee. Lord, Lord, what Thou hast graciously given me be pleased to preserve according to Thy mercy. I commit myself entirely to the fatherly protection of Thy mercy. Lord, guard me by day and by night, that I may not meet with harm. Accompany me when I go abroad, guard me when I am in the street, and bring me home in safety and without injury. Let

my soul be at rest and peace. Let it be in constant communion with Thee, and find its joy and delight in Thee. Let my heart be a dwelling for Jesus Christ and a temple of the Holy Ghost, that Jesus may live and move in me, govern and sanctify me. Avert from me every vexation, anger, and fright. Let not deformed persons come before my eyes, and if this should happen nevertheless, guard my fruit. Let Thy visitation preserve my breath, my life, my going and coming. The Lord preserve my going out and my coming in from this time forth and even forevermore. In the name of the Triune God I now take up my work. O Triune God, preserve, guard, and protect me by Thy power; bear me up in Thine hands; keep me in all my ways, that no evil may befall me, and I will return thanks to Thee and praise Thee as long as I live.

But I commend to Thee, O Triune God, also the fruit which I am bearing. Lord, I pray for it; I present it before Thee; oh, hear my prayer for Thy goodness' sake, yea, for Jesus' sake. Oh, give to my child healthy and well-formed limbs, a sound body, and good gifts of body and mind. And when Thou hast graciously endowed it in secret with such glorious gifts of body and mind, let it be born anew by Holy Baptism soon after its natural birth. O Jesus, Thou hast said: Suffer little children to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of God. Thou didst take children up in Thy arms and bless them. Receive also my child, when it has arrived, into Thy holy arms, and bless it! Give to it the earnest of its adoption as a child of God, Thy Holy Spirit. Sanctify and renew my child unto life everlasting that I may share eternal salvation with it. My hope is firmly established upon the Lord, my God. He is my greatest Good and my Support in every need. To Him alone I dedicate the affections of my heart.

HYMN.

I know not what shall befall me, —
God hangs a mist o'er my eyes, —
And on each step of my onward path
He makes new scenes to arise,
And every joy He sends me comes
As a strange and sweet surprise.

I see not a step before me
As I tread on another year,
But the past is still in God's keeping,
The future His mercy shall clear,
And that which looks dark in the distance
May brighten as I draw near.

For perhaps the dreaded future
Is less bitter far than I think;
The Lord may sweeten the waters
Before I stoop to drink,
Or if Marah must be Marah,
He will stand beside the brink.

It may be that He keeps waiting
For the coming of my feet
Some gift of such rare blessedness,
Some joy so strangely sweet,
That my lips can only tremble
With the thanks they cannot speak.

O restful, blissful ignorance!
'Tis blessed not to know,
It keeps me in those Mighty Arms
Which will not let me go,
And hushes my soul to rest
On the Bosom which loves me so.

And so I go on, not knowing, —
I would not if I might;
I'd rather walk in the dark with God
Than go alone in the light,
I would rather walk with Him by faith
Than walk alone by sight.

My heart shrinks back from trials,
Which the future may disclose,
Yet I never had a sorrow
But what the dear Lord chose, —
So I wait and bow submissive
To the will of Him who knows.

The Woman with Child Remembers the Divine Promises.

EXHORTATION.

Sad and painful though the condition of woman with child is at times, there are comforting and glorious promises for them in which God assures them of His help in their trouble, and promises that He will not leave them nor forsake them, that He will aid them, deliver them, bear them up in His hands, and similar invigorating and strengthening sayings. Now a godly wife during pregnancy should (1) become very familiar with these promises, and derive comfort from them. She should (2) bear in mind that the promises of God concern all men, hence that she can confidently rely on them. And though the desired help, the promised deliverance and help, does not make its appearance at the time or hour when she is longing for it and is in need of it, she should (3) not become despondent on that account and imagine that the promise has failed and will never be fulfilled; but she should (4) firmly trust in the promise of God, who will faithfully keep what He has promised, when His hour for helping has arrived. Meanwhile, she should (5) persevere in prayer, trust, and hope, until at last the hour has arrived when the afflicted soul can joyfully say to the glory of the Most High: Hitherto has the Lord helped me; the Lord has done great things for me, whereof I am glad.

PRAYER.

My God, when Thou saidst, Seek ye My face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. Thou knowest, my God, that without Thee I am nothing, and can do nothing. Who but Thyself can loose my bonds? Who can help me except Thou alone?

Therefore I come to Thee, holding fast Thy word of promise. Thou hast said that Thou wilt not forsake Thine own: oh, do not forsake me! Thou hast promised to be with them in the day of trouble: oh, my day of trouble is approaching; abide with me! Thou hast promised to help Thine own: oh, help me! Thou hast promised to deliver them: oh, deliver me! Lord, in my condition I know not whither to turn except to Thee alone. Many are the cares, worries, and anxieties of my heart, but Thy consolations refresh my soul, and Thy word of promise raises me up. Since I know that Thou art the Protector of Thy believers, the Friend of the forsaken, the Refuge of the grief-stricken, the Help of the

helpless, I am of good cheer and cling to Thee. I will hold Thee fast and Thy Word. When my pain and the anguish of my heart is great, I will sigh to Thee: Lord, I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me. If my help is delayed, it will nevertheless come at last for a comfort to those in misery, and Thou wilt help them gloriously. Thou, O Lord, layest an affliction upon men, but also helpest them bear it; therefore my affliction will not be grievous if Thou wilt help me bear it. I was cast upon Thee from the womb; Thou hast been my confidence from the days that my mother nursed me; therefore Thou shalt remain my trust to the end of my life, come what may. God is my Refuge and Strength, a very present Help in trouble; therefore will not I fear. And why should I be afraid? Is not the Lord with me. The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the Strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? With God I shall confidently enter upon the labor before me; with His aid I will labor and conquer.

O gracious God, strengthen my faith, confirm my trust in Thy promise. Guard me against every mishap, and let me cheerfully reach my appointed time. Meanwhile I will pray and sing, trusting in Thee, until I have been safely delivered, and with my heart shall offer Thee praise and glory for Thy benefits at church as long as I live. Amen; yes, this I will believe; for here is God's Word of which no mishap shall rob me. Forever and ever I shall rest upon this foundation and with the strong hand of faith grasp the anchor of faith, also in my present state. Amen.

HYMN.

Lo! what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make!
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take!
What parchèd ground refreshed as with a shower!
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;
We rise, and all the distant and the near
Stand forth in sunny outline, brave and clear.
We kneel, how weak! We rise, how full of power!
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong;
Or others—that we are not always strong;
That we are ever overborne with care;
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,
And joy, and strength, and courage are with Thee?

The Woman with Child Rejoices in the Almighty Power of God.

EXHORTATION.

When reflecting upon the conception, preservation, growth, and birth of a child, we cannot sufficiently praise the almighty power of God. Without this power no child can be brought into this world, and the birth of every child is in the eyes of all believers a miracle.

Knowing this, a godly wife should (1) trust in this almighty power of her God. She should regard every child that is born into this world as a work of the omnipotence of God. (2) She can comfort herself with the reflection that, as the omnipotent hand of God has helped others, God will also help her. (3) When she is becoming downhearted, she should remember the declaration of the angel who says: "With God nothing shall be impossible." Luke 1, 37. If nothing is impossible with God, a woman with child can derive comfort from reflecting on the almighty power of God. (4) If circumstances should occur to her that have not occurred to other women, she should not on that account cast away her confidence in the almighty power of God; because just for this reason, that He is the Almighty, God can heal every dangerous wound, remove every heavy burden, avert every fatal accident. Men may assist at the birth of a child, but the almighty hand of God is also present, governing everything, and by His power everything will pass off safely.

PRAYER.

My God, my spirit rejoices when I reflect upon Thy omnipotence, on Thy almighty hands which support everything, bear up everything, and deliver from every evil. When I consider my present condition, I say to myself that Thy omnipotence alone must do everything: Thy almighty power must bear me up in Thy hands, if I am not to fall; Thy almighty power must alleviate my discomforts; yea, in the ordeal that is before me Thy almighty hand alone must accomplish everything. If I think of the fruit of my womb, I say to myself again that Thy omnipotence must preserve, strengthen, guard, and bring it forth into the light of day.

My chief comfort now and for the rest of my life is this, that Thou art an almighty God. I am weak, but Thou art strong; I am

wretched, but Thou art almighty; I am powerless, but Thou canst do all things. No one shall rob me of this comfort: God can help me, and God will help me. He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death. Since God is almighty, I cannot be harmed in any way; since He is almighty I shall be gloriously delivered.

Therefore, O almighty God, I commit myself entirely to Thee; watch over me, preserve me, strengthen me. Let Thy almighty power preserve me during my pregnancy till my appointed time has arrived. Let Thy almighty power make me strong when the hour of delivery arrives, assist me during labor, in the beginning, middle, and end of it, until I shall have become a happy mother, and shall be gladdened with the sight of a healthy child. I shall not be afraid, no matter what course my affairs may take, for I have an almighty God; I will not lose heart when my distress becomes great, for I have an almighty God; I will be of good cheer when my labor commences, for I have an almighty God. In my anguish I shall sigh and call to Thee: O almighty God, help me: I trust in Thee; I hope in Thee, my child waits for the hour when Thou wilt help me. O merciful Father, hasten to manifest Thy almighty power to me. Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice. Let Thy almighty power avert from me all danger, preserve the fruit of my womb, give me strength, and gladden me by a safe delivery, and I shall praise and glorify Thy omnipotence as long as I live, and say: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.

I cried to God in my distress, His mercy heard me calling; My Savior saw my helplessness, And kept my feet from falling: For this, Lord, praise and thanks to Thee! Praise God most high, praise God with me! To God all praise and glory!

HYMN.

Be not disheartened, sister,
Though weary the task you try;
Strength will come with the toiling;
You will finish it by and by.
Then sweet in your ear at sunset,
When the day's long course is run,
Will sound the voice of the Master,
And His word of praise, "Well done!"

Be not disheartened, sister,
Though you lose your precious things;
Though the gold you gained so slowly
Fly on the swiftest wings.
There are better than earthly riches,
And loss is sometimes gain;
Wait for the Lord's good hour,
When He'll make His meaning plain.

Be not disheartened, sister,
In the dark and lonesome day,
When the dearest and the truest
From your arms is caught away.
The earth may be bare and silent;
But heaven is just before,
And your path leads up to the splendor
And the love in its open door.

Be not disheartened, sister,
However you may fare;
For here 'tis the pilgrim's portion,
But the song and feast are there;
There, in the dear Lord's presence,
There, in the halls of home,
You will one day hear Him call you,
And cry with joy, "I come!"

Be not disheartened, sister,
For every step of the road
Is under the eye of the Father,
Who measures the weight of the load.
He cares for the tiny sparrows,
And how much more for you!
Look up, and never doubt Him,
His promises all are true.

The Woman with Child Takes Comfort in the Thought that God will Help Her.

EXHORTATION.

When persons in need of help see before them great dangers, manifold suffering, heavy burdens, and hard labor, they are nevertheless of good cheer if they have somebody with them who can aid them in their dangers, help them in their suffering, lighten their burden, and assist them in their work. Now, all these helps have been provided for women with child, hence they may take comfort. (1) When they hear that labor is attended by many dangers, they say: The Lord is with me; therefore I am not afraid. (2) When they suffer much distress, they say to God: Thou art my Helper and Deliverer; O my God, delay not! (3) If their distress increases from day to day, they remind themselves of the fact that whatever affliction the Lord lays on men He helps them bear. (4) If they begin to grow afraid in view of their impending labor, they call to mind that the Lord will bless their labor and see them safely through it to the end.

Ought not these reflections cheer women with child, especially since God in the Holy Scriptures calls Himself a Helper? If God helps a person, his safety is assured. Men oftentimes would be glad to help, but cannot; God, however, is both willing and able to help. Therefore, although the prospect is gloomy and looks critical, still let this thought be graven on her heart: The Lord is my Helper.

PRAYER.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God. Yes, my God, that is my consolation in my present state, that Thou wilt be the health of my countenance. If my countenance is pale from fear, Thou canst drive away all fear by Thy glorious help. If my countenance is wet with tears, Thou canst wipe them away when Thou appearest with Thy gracious help. Therefore, I shall trust in Thee, and to everything that might cause me fear, anguish, and terror, I shall oppose this assurance: God is my Helper, and will remain my Helper.

O almighty God, hasten to me with Thine almighty help when I shall need help. Lord, I hope for Thy salvation and Thy help;

I trust in Thy help. If Thou dost not help me, I perish. When my suffering increases, O Lord, do not depart from me with Thy gracious help. Thou art my only Refuge, my God and my Succorer; I know of no other. If Thou wilt not help me, who can? Help me, O God of my salvation, when I call upon Thee, and hear me. Help me when my condition begins to look critical; help me when my hour arrives. Then I shall in joyful confidence sigh with my Jesus: Father, save me from this hour. If I have Thee with me, I shall conquer, and my weeping shall be turned into rejoicing.

O how gloriously Thou hast helped others! Help me also! Thou art still the same strong, almighty, and gracious God that Thou hast been in olden times. Lord, I keep on praying like the Canaanite woman: Lord, help me! Yea, I do not go away, I do not quit until Thou hast gladdened me with Thy help. O Father of all grace and mercy, come and help Thy child whom nobody else can help. O Jesus, Thou Savior of all men, come and help me, and abide with me until I am safely delivered. O precious Holy Spirit, come and seal to me the comforting assurance that the hour of Thy help will soon arrive. O Triune God, I flee to Thee; do not forsake me. Help me whenever Thou choosest, but, while delaying Thy help, sustain me with Thy grace. Help me in my trouble and deliver me, and I shall thank Thee with joyful lips.

Meanwhile I leave all things to God's direction, He loveth me in weal and woe. His will is good, true His affection, With tender love His heart doth glow. My Fortress and my Rock is He: What pleaseth God, that pleaseth me. My God hath all things in His keeping, He is the ever faithful Friend, He grants me laughter after weeping, And all His ways in blessings end. His love endures eternally: What pleaseth God, that pleaseth me. Amen.

HYMN.

Zion, gird thyself with gladness;
 God is in the midst of thee;
 Not cast off, forsake thy sadness;
 Tender-hearted still is He.
 By His scourgings He hath shown
 That He loved thee as His own.
 Zion, when His ways are heeded,
 Doleful tears are never needed.

Though by surging billows beaten,
Driven on an angry sea,
Till destruction seem to threaten,
Need thy voice so cheerless be?
If thy Savior silent keep,
Must He therefore be asleep?
Zion, all untroubled, waiting,
Thou shalt see the storm abating.

What though rocks and hills be shaken
And from their foundations start,
Yea, by dreadful doom o'ertaken,
Sun and moon and earth depart, —
Yet shall all be well with thee
Here or in eternity.
Zion, all thy bounds are set thee;
Naught on earth beyond can fret thee.

Though thy lot be tribulation,
Tears thy fairest ornaments,
Groans thy song and salutation,
Sighs thy only eloquence,
Though thy blood empurple thee,
All thou hast be penury,
Zion, yet away with grieving;
Be not faithless, but believing.

Stripes and bonds and persecution,
Death and hell may all combine.
Naught can bring thee to confusion,
All eternity is thine.
Bear with joy and fearlessly
What thy Lord permits to thee.
Zion, know that God hath heard thee,
And with needed strength will gird thee.

Soon these sorrows will be quitted;
Soon the promised end will be.
All thy ways to God committed,
He will soon deliver thee.

After insult, scorn, and care
 Thou a crown of joy shalt wear.
 Zion, come what may, hereafter
 God will fill thy mouth with laughter.

Hallelujah! Hail, blest city!
 Yea, beyond all measure blest;
 For the Lord of love and pity
 Will receive thee to His breast,
 Bid thee welcome to His bliss,
 Seal thee with His nuptial kiss.
 Zion, then thy woes surmounted
 Will as naught by thee be counted.

Sing, ye angel choirs, with Zion,
 For her warfare soon is o'er,
 She who deemed herself as dying
 Liveth now and evermore.
 She mid countless joys shall rest
 In the mansions of the blest.
 Zion, naught can separate thee
 From the Lamb and joys that wait Thee.

Meditations for Women in Labor.

When the Hour of Delivery is Approaching.

EXHORTATION.

When Paul assures Christian wives that they shall be saved in child-bearing, he does not mean that they can acquire salvation by the birth of children; for salvation has been acquired by the suffering and death of Christ alone. But he wishes to convey to them this comforting thought that, although they must bear children with much sorrow on account of Adam's transgression, they have nevertheless a gracious God, who is reconciled with them; and if they should even have to die in childbirth, they can still be saved, if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with sobriety.

Accordingly, it is required of them (1) that they continue in faith, that, when the hour of delivery arrives, they do not cast away

their confidence, do not grumble against God, but continue in faith, hope, and trust, even though they should be in sore distress, and that they remember the glorious promises of God and His almighty power. (2) They should abide in the love of God, loving God with all their heart, and saying: O Lord, I love Thee from my heart; I pray Thee, ne'er from me depart, with tender mercy cheer me. They should also continue in love of their neighbor: they should seek reconciliation with God and their fellow-men before their delivery. Accordingly, it has been a custom of godly wives to receive the Lord's Supper during their pregnancy, in order thereby to be assured of the grace of God. They should also continue in love to the fruit of their womb, lest through their carelessness it might be injured, or die through their headstrongness, but should willingly obey the good advice and counsel of the persons attending them. But when unloving mothers act headstrong towards their poor infants at their birth and will not submit to what God has laid upon them, what they are in duty bound to do, and from which even empresses, queens, and princesses are not immune, — in a word, if they will not conduct themselves like other women, they become murderesses of their own children, and their infants will be their accusers before God, because through their indolence they have deprived their infants of life and killed them before their birth. Finally, they should (3) also continue in sanctification with sobriety, so as to lead a holy, decent, and Christian life; they should diligently pray for their infants, shun sin, and thus in a state of sanctification await the hour of their delivery.

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PRAYER.

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Lord, almighty God, faithful and loving Father, the hour of my delivery is coming closer and closer; therefore do Thou come to me with Thy gracious help. I come to Thee with my prayer, my sincere trust, firm confidence, and living faith, in Thy gracious help. Come to me with Thy most holy presence, goodness, and mercy. Come and abide with me at my delivery, during and after the same. If Thou art with me, I have at my side the strongest Deliverer, the mightiest Helper, and the most faithful Friend. Give me a cheerful heart in that critical hour, that I may dismiss all anxiety, stand up, sit down, and lie down fearlessly, and comfort myself with the reflection that all will come to a good issue because Thou art with me. Make my limbs strong, that I may not grow

faint, but perform my labor in Thy power and strength and happily finish it. Through Thy power everything will become easy for me. If the Lord is with me and about me, I am already restored.

To those who are attending me, dear Father, give wisdom and understanding that they may wisely arrange everything and do neither too little nor too much. Bless what they do, and prosper their devices, that they may praise Thee with me, and I with them, for their success. Grant me willingness to accept their advice, and to avoid obstinacy, whereby I might cause injury to myself and harm, or even death, to my child, and thus incur a grievous responsibility. O gracious God, hear my sighs and prayers and those of the persons attending me. If it be Thy will, help me speedily, and grant me a safe delivery. Let me live to behold my child with rejoicing, and thus become a happy mother.

Behold, Lord; here I am; do with me according to Thy good pleasure. Do not forsake me, and do not withdraw Thine hand from me, O God of my salvation. Abide with me in my extreme need, and strengthen my endurance lest I grow weary; my hope, lest I let it slip from me. I can do all things through Him that strengtheneth me, which is Christ. Heavenly Father, bless, guard, and preserve me. Jesus Christ, be with me, strengthen, and refresh me. Holy Spirit, plead for me with God with groanings that cannot be uttered, and witness to my spirit that I am verily God's child. The love of the Father cover me; the grace of the Son refresh me; the succor of the Holy Spirit make me glad.

God knows what must be done to save me, His love for me will never cease, For He upon His palms did grave me With purest gold of loving grace. Avaunt, my own will, off with thee! What pleaseth God, that pleaseth me. My God desires the soul's salvation, Me also He desires to save; Therefore, with Christian resignation All earthly troubles I will brave. His will be done eternally: What pleaseth God, that pleaseth me. Amen.

HYMN.

When bitter winds of trouble blow,
And thou art tossing to and fro,
When waves are rolling mountain high,
And clouds obscure the steadfast sky,—
Fear not, my soul, thy Lord is there,
Betake thyself, my soul, to prayer.

When in the dull routine of life
 Thou yearnest half for pain and strife,
 So weary of the commonplace,
 Of days that wear the selfsame face,—
 Think softly, soul, thy Lord is there,
 And then betake thyself to prayer.

When brims thy cup with sparkling joy,
 When happy tasks the hours employ,
 When men with praise and sweet acclaim
 Upon the highways speak thy name,—
 Then, soul, I bid thee have a care,
 Seek oft thy Lord in fervent prayer.

If standing where two pathways meet,
 Each beckoning thy pilgrim feet,
 Thou art in doubt which road to take,
 Look up and say, "For Thy dear sake," —
 O Master! show Thy footprints fair, —
 "I'd follow Thee." Christ answers prayer.

The tempter oft, with wily toil,
 Seeks thee, my soul, as precious spoil;
 His weapons never lose their edge,
 But thou art Heaven's peculiar pledge!
 Though Satan rage, thy Lord is there, —
 Dear soul, betake thyself to prayer.

Comforting Reflections when Delivery is Approaching.

EXHORTATION.

Frequently godly wives, when the time of their delivery is at hand, become frightened, and alarm inexperienced persons. But why should you be afraid? Is not God with you? God, who has ordained these pains for you, will also help you bear and overcome them. Remember, therefore, at the time of your delivery, (1) that God is a good and gracious God; He does not intend evil to you; for all things must work together for good to them that love God. Since He is a gracious God, He will show you favor and look upon

your misery and affliction. (2) He is faithful; He knows the limit of your strength and ability far better than you do yourselves. He will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (3) God is merciful; as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord also will have compassion on you. (4) God is mighty; He can accomplish what you cannot; for His strength is made manifest in weakness. Do not look upon your feeble strength and ability, but upon God's might. It is not you who are to achieve success in this matter, but God will do it: He will strengthen your hands, arms, and limbs, and you will have to ascribe all glory to God as David did, saying: "Thou art He that took me out of the womb: Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts."

(5) Remember that your pains do not last long, not years and days, like David's affliction or like the sickness of the sufferer at the pool of Bethesda, but only an hour; and even if it should be drawn out longer, say nevertheless with childlike confidence: And though it tarry till the night And till the morn appeareth, My heart still trusteth in His might, It doubteth not, nor feareth. Let this be comfort when your hour approaches.

SIGHINGS UTTERED BEFORE DELIVERY.

1.

Lord, almighty God, I perceive that my hour will soon be at hand when I am to prepare for my delivery. Therefore I come to Thee and pray Thee: Do not depart from me. Oh, abide with me; give me strength for my labor, and graciously deliver me. Alleviate the pains of labor which Thou hast laid on our sex. But Thou didst lay these pains on Eve and her daughters at the time when Thou again didst extend Thy favor to them and didst promise them Jesus, the Woman's Seed and the Reconciler of men with God. Therefore I do not regard the impending pains as the punishment which an angry judge, but as a chastisement which a loving and reconciled father inflicts; they are to remind me of the fall into sin of our first parents, but also of the fact that by Jesus Christ I am reconciled with God.

Oh, therefore, Thou strong and almighty God, help me effectually. My help is from Thee alone; unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift

up my soul. O my God, I trust in Thee; let me not be ashamed. O my Strength, haste Thee to help me. O Jesus, who wast born man, for the sake of Thy holy birth and incarnation, have mercy upon me; save me from this hour, and preserve me. O precious Holy Spirit, abide in my heart, crying, "Abba, Father," and witness to my spirit that amidst my pangs I am still a child of God. O Holy Trinity, have mercy on me, and help me. Amen.

2.

O loving God, Thou lovest men sincerely and hast promised especially to sustain us in our sufferings and infirmities. Thou knowest the condition in which I am, and seest for what I am preparing and what is before me. All my hope, O God, is in Thee. O mighty God, who without human aid providest for the lonely deer in the wild forest when they cast their young amid ice and snow, oh, let the fruit of my womb be commended to Thee, and bless the helping hands which are ready to aid at this birth. Do Thou give me the best aid and graciously deliver me.

Thou hast said: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." Upon this gracious promise I rely, and cheerfully take up this labor to which Thou hast appointed me in my calling and condition. I will be confident and wait for Thine help. According to Thy providence and will I will gladly endure what Thou layest upon me; only be not far from me, Lord, Lord, my Refuge in need. Be and remain to my unborn child a gracious God; preserve what Thy hands have fashioned. Graciously dissolve at the proper time the bonds of nature, and when all men are about to despair, manifest in me Thy power and marvelous goodness. Let Thy strength be made perfect in my weakness; strengthen me in spirit and in body; alleviate and diminish my pains, and let my fruit, safe and sound, behold the light of this world. Place it living into my arms, and I shall adoringly and reverently sing praises to Thee, and what Thou hast given me I shall give back to Thee as an offering and as Thy child in Holy Baptism.

But if it be decreed in Thy holy counsel that I shall give up my life in this labor, let Thy will be done. Thou art my God, my Lord, my Father; I am Thy creature, Thy handmaid, Thy

child. Do with me as seemeth best to Thee: I am ready for life or death, and though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee. Grant me a patient and submissive heart, constant faith, and firm trust.

Help me, for I am weak; I fight, Yet scarce can battle longer; I cling but to Thy grace and might, 'Tis Thou canst make me stronger; When sore temptations are my lot, And tempests round me lower, Break the power: So, through deliverance wrought, I know that Thou forsak'st me not.

SIGHINGS DURING LABOR.

1.

Lord, Lord! great in counsel and mighty in work, behold, here I am, and sigh only for Thy help. In this work no man can help me except Thou alone. To Thy glory I acknowledge that the birth of a human being is a miracle which only Thou canst bring about; it is in no man's power to bring a child into this world. Therefore I humbly beseech Thee, O almighty Helper in need, to manifest Thy almighty power now. Thou knowest my pains, for Thou hast laid them upon me; Thou knowest my downsitting and mine up-rising, my going about and my lying down; for Thou, Lord, art near me. Thou beholdest my tears, and my sighing is not hid from Thee.

I call to mind now Thy infinite omnipotence: Thou canst do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think; no trouble is so great that Thou couldst not deliver from it. Behold, Thy mighty hands have fashioned my child, clothed it with flesh and skin; Thou hast all this time granted it life and favor, and Thy visitation has preserved its spirit. Therefore, according to Thy mercy usher it now into the light of day. Lord, Lord, Thou hast helped so many thousands in all places of the world; according to Thy goodness Thou wilt help me also. I trust in Thy loving-kindness and Thy trust; let them continually preserve me. If affairs should take a critical turn, speak comfort to my soul, as Thou hast said: I am with thee in trouble to deliver thee; I will not leave thee, nor forsake thee. Let me faithfully do my part in this work, in order that I may keep a good conscience; but do Thou strengthen me in my weakness.

God liveth still; Soul, despair not, fear no ill! God is good; from His compassion Earthly help and comfort flow; Strong is

His right hand to fashion All things well for man below: Trial, oft the most distressing, In the end has proved a blessing. Wherefore, then, my soul, despair? God still lives, who heareth prayer.

2.

O gracious and merciful God, Thou hast said: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." Upon this gracious summons I, too, come before Thee in this hour and call upon Thee, crying, "Abba, Father!" I am crying to Thee in my trouble; oh, hear my voice, and hide not Thyself from my supplication! Remember that I am Thy child: oh, let me not suffer pain above that I am able. Lord, when I am in distress, send me alleviation. Jesus, Thou Son of David, for the sake of Thy holy birth and incarnation, have mercy upon me. O Lord God, help me and support me; help me and bring me joy. O Holy Spirit, Thou Comforter in every need, comfort my soul with the assurance that I shall soon be a happy mother. Bring my anxious prayer before the throne of God, and if in my distress I am not able to pray, O Jesus, do Thou pray for me; O Holy Spirit make intercession with God for me with groanings that cannot be uttered. O Triune God, extend Thy hand to me and my child. Let us not perish, nor suffer injury. Reveal Thy power in us, and we shall praise and magnify Thy might; not only here in this world of mortality shall we publish Thy glory, but also in endless eternity it shall be the burden of our songs. Let the fruit of my womb, which is Thy creature, not perish in this ordeal, but graciously preserve it by Thy power. Help me that I omit nothing that I ought to do now, and that by Thy grace I may rejoice to behold my child. Lord God Father in heaven, have mercy upon me; Lord God Son, the Savior of the world, have mercy upon me; Lord God Holy Ghost, have mercy upon me. Amen.

3.

Gracious and mighty God, the hour has arrived which Thou hast appointed for my delivery. Therefore I now turn to Thee and cry: Father, save me from this hour. In Thy name I begin my work; in Thy name I shall finish it. Lord, my Creator, be with me and strengthen me. Jesus, Thou Son of God, who wast made man, be with me and refresh me. Embrace me with Thine arms and hold me. O precious Holy Spirit, give me patience and cheerfulness for this work: have compassion on me and cheer me.

O Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, haste Thee to help me. Arise, O Lord, for my help, or I perish. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me! O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, give me Thy peace. Amen.

Scripture-Passages, Sighings, and Prayers during Labor.

The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him: He also will hear their cry, and will save them.

Ps. 145, 18, 19.

I leave Thee not; Thou art my Jesus ever, Though earth rebel,
And death and hell Would from its steadfast hold my faith dis sever.
Ah, no! I ever will Cling to my Helper still. Hear what my love
is taught: Thou art my Jesus ever, I leave Thee not, I leave Thee
not!—I leave Thee not, O Thou who sweetly cheerest! Whose
fresh supplies Cause strength to rise, Just in the hour when faith's
decay is nearest. If sickness chill the soul, and nights of languor
roll, My heart one hope has caught; O Thou who sweetly cheerest,
I leave Thee not, I leave Thee not!

O my Jesus, be near me now, and abide with me until Thou
hast helped me. Oh, do what I desire; however, I desire nothing
but what Thou hast promised in Thy Word, namely, Thy help.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou dis-
quieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him,
who is the health of my countenance and my God. *Ps. 43, 5.*

Let us suffer here with Jesus, To His image e'er conform;
Heaven's glory soon will please us, Sunshine follow after storm.
Having sown in tears, in gladness We shall reap. With patient
cheer, Let us hope, and, void of fear, Bide the turning of our
sadness. Christ, I suffer here with Thee; There, oh, share Thy
joy with me!

O my Jesus, I hope for Thy salvation; I am waiting for Thy
help. Let it come soon. Thou only art my Hope. Hear me;
make me to rejoice; deliver me, and I shall thank Thee forever.

The Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit. . . . For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer. *Is. 54, 6—8.*

God liveth still; Soul, despair not, fear no ill! He who gives the clouds their measure, Stretching out the heavens alone; He who stores the earth with treasure Is not far from every one. God in every need defendeth Him whose heart in love ascendeth. Wherefore, then, my soul, despair? God still lives, who heareth prayer.

O my God, have compassion on me; forsake me not; for Thou art my God. O merciful God, my eyes are raised towards heaven, and are longing for Thy help. Do not hide Thy face from me. Let Thy grace strengthen, and Thine hand sustain me. O Lord, how long, oh, how long shall my anguished heart yearn for Thee?

Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save.

Is. 59, 1.

Let not sorrow dim your eye, Soon shall every tear be dry;
Let not woe your course impede, Great your help, if great your need.

I know, my God, that with Thee nothing is impossible; therefore I trust in Thee. Extend Thine hand to me as Thou didst to sinking Peter. Thy hand can help in every need and deliver from every trouble. Lord, I look up to Thee, I am longing for Thy mercy.

Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high, because he hath known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation. *Ps. 91, 14—16.*

In Thee have I, howe'er distressed, Found ever counsel, aid, and rest. I cannot all forsaken be, While still my heart can trust in Thee. Thine office and Thy person show, That Thou great miracles canst do; Miraculous was, Lord, Thy birth, When Thou wast born a child on earth.

O my Jesus, since no one can help me except Thou alone, hasten to me with Thy gracious help. Behold, I am now in dis-

tress; oh, deliver me according to Thy promise: I have set my love upon Thee; deliver me. Since Thou hast said: Seek ye My face, my heart says: Thy face, Lord, will I seek.

The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.

Is. 54, 10.

I can rest in thoughts of Him, When all courage else grows dim, For I know my soul shall prove His is more than father's love. — Would the powers of ill affright, I can smile at all their might; Or the cross be pressing sore, God, my God, lives evermore!

O Jesus, take not Thy grace and Thy Holy Spirit from me; oh, do not leave me; strengthen me for my labor and during the labor in which I am now engaged. Remember the covenant which Thou hast made with me in Holy Baptism. By virtue of this covenant Thou art my Father, and I am Thy child. O my Father, remember Thy child, help Thy child, have compassion on Thy child.

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. *Ps. 103, 13.*

Lord God, who art my Father dear, I pray in Jesus' name: O hear What, trusting in His promised Word, I humbly ask of Thee, good Lord. — Lord, at Thy word Amen I say Increase my feeble faith, I pray. Thou lead'st me with a Father's care, O let me be Thy child and heir.

O my gracious God and Father, I know not where to seek comfort and help except with Thee alone, where I shall surely find it. Therefore, I cry to Thee: O help me, my Father; have mercy on me, my Father; let Thy tender fatherly heart be revealed to me, that my heart may soon be rejoiced. Thou art able to do this; therefore grant me my prayer for Thy mercy's sake.

In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion. Deliver me in Thy righteousness, and cause me to escape; incline Thine ear unto me, and save me. Be Thou my strong Habitation, whereunto I may continually resort; Thou hast

given commandment to save me; for Thou art my Rock and my Fortress. *Ps. 71, 1—3.*

God of my life, to Thee I call; Afflicted at Thy feet I fall; When the great water floods prevail, Leave not my trembling heart to fail.

O Lord, my misery and distress is well known to Thee. Lord, Lord, as my need becomes more urgent, I shall more eagerly cry for help. I shall do in my anguish like my Jesus, who in His agony prayed more fervently.

My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning. *Ps. 130, 6.*

And though it tarry till the night And till the morn appeareth, My heart still trusteth in His might, It doubteth not, nor feareth.

O my God, this is and shall remain my firm resolve: I will not doubt God's help, though it be delayed ever so long. Even if the Lord should hide Himself from me a little while, He will nevertheless arise soon for my help, and be gracious to me.

Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove; mine eyes fail with looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me. What shall I say? He hath both spoken unto me, and Himself hath done it. *Is. 38, 14. 15.*

Out of the depths I cry to Thee, Lord, hear my lamentation; Bend down Thy gracious ear to me, And grant my supplication.

The Answer of Jesus.

Hold fast by Me, I am Thy rock and castle; I wholly give Myself for thee, For thee I strive and wrestle; For I am thine, and thou art mine, Henceforth my place is also thine; The foe shall never part us.

O my Jesus, all my hope is in Thee, my strong and mighty Helper. Do as Thou hast promised me. With Thee I have begun this work; oh, add Thy blessing to it! Help me and my child, and grant us that we may behold one another with joy, and live before Thee. Lord, have mercy upon us!

Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for He shall pluck my feet out of the net. Turn Thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged: Oh, bring Thou me out of my distresses. Look upon mine affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins.

Ps. 25, 15—18.

In every trouble, sharp and strong, My soul to Jesus flies; My anchor-hold is firm in Him, When swelling billows rise. — His comforts bear my spirit up, I trust a faithful God; The sure foundation of my hope Is in a Savior's blood.

Lord Jesus, I turn to Thee in faith; oh, come to me! Behold how I suffer; strengthen my faith, support my trust, that I may not waver and fall away from Thee. Come to my side, Lord; hear my prayer; do not forsake me. Oh, has the time arrived that I may be gladdened with Thine help?

Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Rev. 22, 20.

O Thou who in the olive-shade, When the dark hour came on, Didst with a breath of heavenly aid, Strengthen Thy suffering Son: Oh, by the anguish of that night, Send us now blest relief; Or to the chastened, let thy might Hallow this whelming grief.

O my Jesus, this is the wish and desire of my heart, that Thou wouldst come soon. Oh, come and deliver me; come and make me to rejoice; come, and let me behold what I long to behold!

And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee. Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not Thy peace at my tears. *Ps. 39, 7. 12.*

When overwhelmed with grief, My heart within me dies, Helpless, and far from all relief, To heaven I lift mine eyes. — O lead me to the Rock That's high above my head, And make the covert of Thy wings My shelter and my shade.

Lord Jesus, hasten to me; help me, O God, my Helper, and I shall be helped. I know of no other escape from this anguish and distress; therefore I beseech Thee: Oh, come; oh, come; oh, help me!

He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Is. 40, 29, 31.

Full of trembling expectation, Feeling much and fearing more, Mighty God of my salvation, I Thy timely help implore. Suffering Son of Man, be near me All my sufferings to sustain; By Thy sorer griefs to cheer me, By Thy more than mortal pain.

O Lord, my God, give me new strength; grant me the courage, power, and strength of Thy Holy Spirit. I am too feeble to accomplish this work, but in the strength of God I can do all things. Lord, Lord, strengthen me also in this endeavor. My God, help me to overcome with rejoicing. The name of the Lord be praised!

Unless the Lord had been my Help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence. In the multitude of my thoughts within me Thy comforts delight my soul. *Ps. 94, 17, 19.*

I will extol Thee, Lord on high: At Thy command afflictions fly; Who but a God can speak and save From the dark borders of the grave?—Thine anger but a moment stays, Thy love is life and length of days: Though grief and tears the night employ, The morning star restores our joy.

Lord, almighty God, from whom cometh all help to the children of men on earth, Thou hast said: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble." Upon Thy command I am now calling and say: Lord, have mercy upon me. Remove the grievances and anxieties of my soul. Grant me what I hope for; give me what I pray for. Lord, it is in Thy power to do so.

We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed. *Rom. 5, 3—5.*

Oh, let my trembling soul be still While darkness veils the mortal eye, And wait Thy wise, Thy holy will, Wrapped yet in fears and mystery. I cannot, Lord, Thy purpose see; Yet all is well, since ruled by Thee.

O Lord, help me according to Thy great goodness and mercy. I am waiting for Thy help; I hope for a safe delivery, which it is in Thy power to grant me. Look upon me, a woman in sadness, and make me to rejoice again. Let my hour arrive, in order that I may praise Thee with joyful lips.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Jas. 5, 16.

I look to Thee in every need, And never look in vain; I feel Thy strong and tender love, And all is well again. The thought of Thee is mightier far Than sin and pain and sorrow are.— Discouraged in the work of life, Disheartened by its load, Shamed by its failure or its fears, I sink beside the road; But let me only think of Thee, And then new heart springs up in me.

Lord, almighty God, who dost not refuse the sighing of the afflicted, and dost not despise the desire of an aggrieved heart, hear our prayer which we offer to Thee in our trouble, and graciously hear us.

Give ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not Thyself from my supplication. Attend unto me, and hear me. I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me. *Ps. 55, 1. 2. 5.*

Hope on, thou heart, grief-riven, Hope, and courageous be, Where anguish thee had driven, Thou shalt deliverance see. God from thy pit of sadness Shall raise thee graciously. Wait, and the sun of gladness Thine eyes shall early see.

O Lord God, Thou canst help me, for Thou art an almighty God; Thou wilt help me, for Thou art my loving God and Father. Oh, therefore, hear me: let Thy face shine upon me, and I shall be revived.

He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. *2 Cor. 6, 2.*

Thy calmness bends serene above My restlessness to still; Around me flows Thy quickening life To nerve my faltering will. Thy presence fills my solitude; Thy providence turns all to good.— Embosomed in Thy covenant love, Held in Thy Word, I stand;

Thy hand in all things I behold, And all things in Thy hand.
Thou leadest me by unsought ways, And turn'st my mourning
into praise.

O Lord, has not my hour arrived yet? O Lord, how long wilt
Thou forget me thus? Yet I know my God does not forget me:
His love is too great, His heart too compassionate. Oh, deliver me
for Thy goodness' sake! Oh, how long, how long shall my heart
be in anguish, longing for Thee?

Let my supplication come before Thee; deliver me according
to Thy word. I have longed for Thy salvation, O Lord; and Thy
Law is my delight. Let my soul live, and it shall praise Thee;
and let Thy judgments help me. *Ps. 119, 170. 174. 175.*

O Love divine, that stooped to share Our sharpest pang, our
bitterest tear, On Thee is cast each earth-born care; We smile at
pain when Thou art near. — On Thee we fling our burdening woe,
O Love divine, forever dear, Content to suffer while we know,
Living and dying, Thou art near!

O Lord, my God, through the mist of my affliction and anguish
I shall look to Thee alone. I shall not look about me, for there
I see only feeble men, but I shall look upward, heavenward, to
Thee, O almighty God. Let Thy grace succor me, and Thine arm
rescue me. Help me, O God of my salvation, and I shall be helped.

I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them,
and make them rejoice from their sorrow. *Jer. 31, 13.*

He may, awhile still staying, His comforts keep from thee, And,
on His part delaying, Seem to have utterly Forgotten and forsaken
And put thee out of mind, Though thou'rt by grief o'ertaken, No
time for thee to find. — But if thou never shrinkest, And true dost
still remain, He'll come when least thou thinkest, And set thee free
again, Thee from the load deliver, That burdeneth thy heart. That
thou hast carried never For any evil part.

O my God, deliver me from my burden; do not delay Thy
help any longer; turn my mourning into rejoicing, and after my
sadness gladden me with a safe delivery. With God is my salvation,
my honor; my confidence is in God.

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. *Ps. 121, 1. 2.*

No strength of my own, or goodness, I claim, But since I have known the Savior's great name, In this my strong tower for safety I hide — The Lord is my power — the Lord will provide.

O Lord, Triune God, I have placed all my hope in Thee, and long for Thee. Lord God Father, have mercy upon me and my child; Lord Jesus, strengthen me and succor me; O Holy Spirit, refresh me with Thy consolation, that I may soon be gladdened, delivered, and restored. Let me obtain help speedily. O Triune God, have compassion on me.

The vision [the promise of the divine help] is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

Hab. 2, 3.

From God shall naught divide me, For He is true for aye, And on my path will guide me, Who else should often stray; His ever-bounteous hand By night and day is heedful, And gives me what is needful, Where'er I go or stand.

O yes, my God, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me and help me. After the delay of Thy help let the happy hour of my deliverance now arrive. Meanwhile I shall persevere in my sighing and prayers, and say: Lord Jesus, help me overcome! Lord Jesus, help me wrestle! My deliverance, my life, my help are in Thy hands.

How long wilt Thou forget me, O Lord? Forever? How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? Consider and hear me, O Lord, my God. *Ps. 13, 1—3.*

O God, my days are dark indeed How oft this aching heart must bleed; The narrow way, how filled with pain, That I must pass ere heaven I gain! — How hard to teach this flesh and blood To seek alone th' eternal God! Ah, whither now for comfort turn? For Thee, my Jesus, do I yearn.

O my gracious and merciful God, now that Thy help is delayed, I am in anxiety, but I will not despair. Thou art my Father,

and I am Thy child. Oh, do not hide Thy face from me any longer. Speak the word only, and I shall be restored; for when Thou speakest, it is done; when Thou commandest, it stands fast. Lord, graciously hear me.

O Lord, the Hope of Israel, heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved; for Thou art my praise. Be not a terror unto me: Thou art my Hope in the day of evil.

Jer. 17, 13. 14. 17.

Hast Thou not bid me seek Thy face? And shall I seek in vain? And can the ear of sovereign grace Be deaf when I complain?—No, still the ear of sovereign grace Attends the sufferer's prayer. Oh, may I ever find access To breathe my sorrows there!

O my Jesus, all my hope is now in Thee and in Thy almighty power. Help me, O my Savior, speedily, if it be Thy holy will. Help me that I may rejoice over Thy help. Oh, how I shall glorify Thy name, and sing praises unto Thee when Thou hast gloriously delivered me! My trust is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

I have trusted in Thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation. I will sing unto the Lord because He hath dealt bountifully with me. *Ps. 13, 5. 6.*

No grief can ever be so sore But Thy sweet name can cheer me more; So keen no sorrow's rankling dart But Thy sweet name can heal my heart.—Although my flesh and heart may fail, I'll heed it not; I shall not quail; My Savior, if I have but Thee, I shall be blest eternally.

O faithful Savior, Thou kind Lover of men, when Thou saidst, Seek ye My face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. I am now seeking Thy face, Lord. I know Thou canst help me and art glad to help. Therefore I hope in Thee; I am now waiting from moment to moment. O God, let my hour arrive. Lord, help me according to Thy mercy. Meanwhile my trust in Thee remains firm.

My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord: remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. *Lam. 3, 18—21.*

With heart and soul I'm Thine fore'er; Sin, death, and hell
I need not fear, The world can show no truth like Thine, And
therefore will I not repine.— I know Thou wilt forsake me not,
Thy truth is fixed, though dark my lot, Thou art my Shepherd,
and Thy sheep From harm forever Thou wilt keep.

O yes, my God, I am thinking of Thee; therefore I say: The
Lord remembers me and blesses me; He lets His face shine
upon me. Though my ability is not great, though there is with
me no strength for this birth, I still have power and strength in
God. I shall yet behold with delight His deliverance.

Thou, which hast showed me great and sore troubles, shalt
quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depth
of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me
on every side. *Ps. 71, 20, 21.*

They only all its power shall prove Whose hearts have learned
Thy faith and love; How many a time I've sadly said, Far better
were it I were dead; Far better ne'er the light to see If I had not
this joy in Thee; For he who hath not Thee in faith, His very life
is merely death.

O God, if it is Thy will that I shall have to pass through great
anguish and pain, do not lay hold of me too violently. Thou
knowest my ability; my strength is not hid from Thee. Oh, there-
fore, refresh me! When I am sinking, support me; when I faint,
restore me; when I am weary, make me strong. Lord God of my
life, preserve my life and that of my child, and I shall praise and
glorify Thy name forevermore.

Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid;
for the Lord JEHOVAH is my Strength and my Song; He also is
become my Salvation. Sing unto the Lord; for He hath done
excellent things; this is known in all the earth. *Is. 12, 2. 5.*

Where'er in grief I pray and sing, I feel new courage in me
spring; Thy Spirit witnesseth that this Is foretaste of th' eternal
bliss.— Therefore, while life remains in me, I'll bear Thy cross
and follow Thee. Grant me a patient, willing mood; I know that
it shall work my good.— Help me to do my task aright That it
may stand before Thy sight; Let me this flesh and blood control,
From sin and shame preserve my soul.

O yes, my God, that is my consolation, that my life will at last have a good and happy ending, because Thou art my Strength, my Helper in need, and my Deliverer. If I have God with me, I have a sure deliverance. Therefore, I shall be still and hope. Being still and hoping in the Lord, I shall be strong. I can do all things through Him that strengtheneth me, Christ.

Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws. *Ps. 22, 11. 15.*

If sorrow comes, He sent it, In Him I put my trust; I never shall repent it, For He is true and just, And endeth every ill; My life and soul I render To God, my strong Defender, Let Him do as He will. — Whate'er shall be His pleasure Is surely best for me; He gave His dearest Treasure, That our weak hearts may see How good His will is toward us; And in His Son He gave us Whate'er could bless and save us. Praise Him who loveth thus!

Yes, Thy love and faithfulness, my Jesus, is the foundation of my hope and confidence. Thou hast loved me with an everlasting love, and because of Thy love Thou hast often helped and saved me. Therefore, I hope that Thou wilt restore me also this time. Although my distress is great, my help still seems afar off, and from great weariness my tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth, my heart is still directed toward Thee: Thou wilt yet bring me happily through all this distress. That I believe; that I know. O Lord, strengthen my faith and confidence.

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness. The Lord is my Portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him. *Lam. 3, 22—24.*

Seems it in my anguish lone As if God forsook His own, Yet I hold the knowledge fast, God will surely help at last. — Though awhile it be delayed, He denieth not His aid; Though it come not off with speed, It will surely come at need.

O my gracious God, Thy mercies are renewed unto me, not only very morning, but every moment. Thou dost strengthen and support me every minute. How could I accomplish all this without

Thee? Thy visitation has preserved my spirit. Thou strengthenest my head and my hands. Hence I am not forsaken; God does not leave me, and I do not leave Him. Therefore, the hour of my deliverance will soon arrive, because I have with me Him from whom cometh all help.

Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness. Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress. Have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer. But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself; the Lord will hear when I call unto Him.

Ps. 4, 1, 3.

God liveth still. Soul, despair not, fear no ill! Is thy cross too great and pond'rous Cast on Him thy grievous load; God is great, His love is wondrous, He will speed thee on the road. For His truth endureth ever, And His mercy ceaseth never. Wherefore, then, my soul despair? God still lives, who heareth prayer.

O my God, I know that Thou hearest me at all times; therefore, I shall trust in Thee in my critical hour. I shall faithfully hold to Thee when violent tempests descend upon me. If Thou leadest me strange paths, let them only be blessed paths. I know that Thou art with me, that Thou art standing at my side, although Thou hast not yet made Thy help manifest. Meanwhile I say believingly: Hasten to help me, O God, my Deliverer!

The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. *Lam. 3, 25, 26.*

God liveth still. Soul, despair not, fear no ill! When the world would let thee perish, Pathless all thy tangled way, God the nearer draws, to cherish Him who makes the Lord his stay. Children oft that most He loveth Thus with strictest rod He proveth. Wherefore, then, my soul despair? God still lives, who answers prayer.

Yes, my God, my soul waiteth for Thee, and my confidence is not shaken. O kind Jesus, refresh me with Thy loving-kindness in my distress. Stablish my tottering limbs, strengthen my feeble arms. I hope in Thy goodness; I am waiting for Thy salvation; I comfort myself with Thy mercy. O God of all grace, who comfortest us in anguish, let Thy mercy be vouchsafed to me.

I have called upon Thee, for Thou wilt hear me, O God; incline Thine ear unto me, and hear my speech. Show Thy marvelous loving-kindness, O Thou that savest by Thy right hand them which put their trust in Thee. . . . Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of Thy wings. *Psa. 17. 6*—

My faith looks up to Thee, Thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine! Now hear me while I pray: Take all my guilt away; O let me from this day Be wholly Thine!— May Thy rich grace impart Strength to my fainting heart, My zeal inspire; As Thou hast died for me, O may my love to Thee Pure, warm, and changeless be, A living fire.— While life's dark maze I tread, And griefs around me spread, Be Thou my Guide; Bid darkness turn to day, Wipe sorrow's tear away, Nor let me ever stray From Thee aside.— When ends life's transient dream, When death's cold, sullen stream Shall o'er me roll, Blest Savior, then in love Fear and distrust remove O bear me safe above, A ransomed soul!

O Lord, preserve me and my child from misfortune. Cover us both with the wings of Thy mercy. Hear my sighing and help me. If my distress is to increase, let Thy help become more powerful. Even though it should seem as if Thou wouldst slay me, I shall nevertheless trust in Thee. Thy hand is not waxed short; I am not looking at my feebleness, but to Thee, O gracious, strong, and merciful God.

He maketh sore and bindeth up; He woundeth, and His hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. *Job 5, 18, 19.*

To heaven I lift mine eye, To heaven, Jehovah's throne, For there my Savior sits on high, And thence shall strength and aid supply To all He calls His own.— For He, my God and Friend, Shall keep my soul from harm, In each sad scene of doubt attend, And guide my life, and bless mine end, With His almighty arm.

O God, the help which Thou hast often sent me in former times encourages me to hope that Thou wilt be my Succor and Deliverer also this time. Thou hast helped so many; manifest Thy goodness also to me, and after my deliverance my lips shall abundantly praise Thee and say, This is the Lord's doing! Blessed be the name of the Lord!

The Lord, thy God, is a merciful God; He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which He swore unto them. *Deut. 4, 31.*

'Tis not a lonely night-watch Which by the couch I spend
Jesus is close beside me: My Savior and my Friend. — Often
I strive all vainly To ease the aching head, Then silently and gently
Himself He makes my bed. — Do we not hear Him saying, "Your
guilt on Me was laid, Ye are My blood-bought jewels: Fear not,
be not dismayed"?

O my Father, remember the covenant which in Holy Baptism
Thou hast made with me: remember that Thou art my Father and
I am Thy child. Jesus, remember that Thou hast washed and
cleansed me with Thy holy blood. I flee to Thee, and implore Thy
help in my distress. Oh, deliver me, refresh me, gladden me!

The Lord will not cast off forever; but though He cause grief,
yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His
mercies. For He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children
of men. *Lam. 3, 31—33.*

Do not I trust in Thee, O Lord? Do not I rest in Thee alone?
Is not the comfort of Thy Word The sweetest cordial I have
known? When vexed with care, bowed down with grief, Where
else could I obtain relief? — O yes, these things are ever true; Thy
promise is forever sure; And all I now am passing through, And
all that I may still endure, Will but endear Thy Word to me, And
draw me nearer, Lord, to Thee.

O yes, my Shepherd will not forsake His sheep, nor my Father
His child. As Thou hast sent me grief, O my God, send me also
joy. Since Thou hast put Thy blessing upon me, let me now
realize it. O Jesus, place my child living into my arms; I shall
in turn place it into the arms of Thy love in Holy Baptism, and
thus return the gift Thou hast bestowed on me. While it is mine
by nature and its physical birth, it shall be Thine by the new birth.

Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even
the God of our salvation. He that is our God is the God of
salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.

Psa. 68, 19. 20.

Though a heavy cross I'm bearing, And my heart Feels the
smart, Shall I be despairing? God can help me who doth send it,
He doth know All my woe And how best to end it.

Lord, Thou hast put this burden upon me; remove it again; for Thou art the Helper and Refuge of all who believe in Thee. How easy it is for Thee to deliver me, to loosen my bonds, to open the door of life! Nothing is impossible with Thee. In this confidence let me firmly abide the hour of my deliverance.

Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me. *Ps. 50, 15.*

How richly God consoleth those Whom no one else befriendeth! The door of grace does never close; Sense cannot comprehend it. How this may be, and deems all lost, When through this very cross a host Of champions God is raising.

O my God, I am waiting for Thy help! Without Thee I am utterly forsaken; therefore, I call upon Thee in my trouble: deliver me, hear me, have compassion on me, comfort me with Thine help, and uphold me with Thy free Spirit.

I cried to Thee, O Lord; and unto the Lord I made supplication. Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me. Lord, be Thou my Helper. *Ps. 30, 8, 10.*

He knows the time for joy, and truly Will send it when He sees it meet; When He has tried and purged thee duly And finds thee free from all deceit, He comes to thee all unaware, And makes thee own His loving care.

O yes, Lord Jesus, let the hour of Thy help come soon; I am waiting for Thee with longing. Meanwhile I shall sigh and implore Thee; Thou wilt hear me, and help me according to Thy promise.

Do Thou for me, O God the Lord, for Thy name's sake. Because Thy mercy is good, deliver Thou me. Help me, O Lord, my God! O save me according to Thy mercy! *Ps. 109, 21, 26.*

In God, my faithful God, I trust when dark my road; Though many woes o'ertake me, Yet He will not forsake me; His love it is doth send them, And when 'tis best will end them.

This is my comfort in all my sufferings, that God is with me, the mighty Protector of His children. To Him I commit myself; He will do all things well.

(If death seems to be approaching, the "Passages and Prayers for the Dying" in the Daily Handbook may be read.)

Meditations for Women in Confinement.

The Woman in Confinement Thanks God for Safe Delivery.

EXHORTATION.

"A woman, as soon as she is delivered, remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world," thus speaks the mouth of Truth, Christ, John 16, 21. God lets godly wives realize this, and they dismiss all sadness after their safe delivery, and greatly praise God.

They should praise God (1) for His almighty power, which sustained them, and for the help which He afforded them; for they are bound to confess that without God's special aid all their efforts would have been in vain. They should (2) praise God's mercy in shortening and alleviating their labor-pains. They should (3) thank God that He has permitted them to behold their child with joy, or, if the child is dead, that He has received it into His everlasting joy and glory, and according to His mercy has given to their child the eternal life of bliss in the place of this earthly life.

(4) They ought not to interrupt the repose which God has given them by precocious acts or from avarice, through unnecessary walking and other efforts, but should gratefully accept and enjoy it. For some women in confinement wish to display their vigor by moving about during the days of rest which God has appointed them, and thereby frequently contract serious sicknesses and grievous permanent ailments, and incur unfortunate mishaps. These they will have to attribute to their wantonness, and will have to suffer injury for wanting to be wiser than God, who considered this period of rest necessary for them and ordained it for them, while they regarded it as unnecessary and despised it. Accordingly, husbands should not disturb their wives during this period of their rest, but should faithfully obey the ordinance of God, who commanded women in childbed to remain at home for six weeks and to recuperate, Lev. 12, and should not strain them by work or compel them to leave their childbed before the proper time.

(5) Women in confinement should also call upon God daily to

preserve them and their child from every harm and mishap, and should thus commit themselves and the child to God by diligent prayer. Finally, they should (6) pray God for health and new strength, in order that, after they have regained these, they may go abroad again and celebrate their first attendance at church.

PRAYER.

All-powerful, strong, and mighty God! I appear with joy before Thy most holy countenance and praise Thee for the great and glorious blessing which Thou hast vouchsafed to me. I praise Thee for alleviating my pains during labor, for my safe delivery, and for holding Thy protecting hand over me during the delivery. O Lord, how great is Thy almighty power, how glorious Thy strength! When I was about to sink, Thou didst sustain me; when I was weak and about to faint, Thou didst refresh me; when all my strength was nearly gone, Thou didst give me new vigor. Yes, Thou hast done all things gloriously: Thou hast given me my child, preserved my life, averted all harm, and made me glad by fulfilling my wish. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. The Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad. Blessed be the Lord, because He hath heard the voice of my supplications. The Lord is my Strength and my Shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise Him. Oh, give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so; for His mercy endureth forever; whom He delivered out of trouble, and who cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses. O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful work to the children of men! O that they would offer thanks and tell of His acts with rejoicing! Yes, my God: I am telling of Thy work to-day with joy and say: What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?

O my God, continue Thy mercy upon me, and let it be enlarged. Protect, strengthen, and preserve me also in my childbed. Guard me and my child against every harm, against sickness and dangerous accidents. Restore my lost strength to me speedily, and let me grow stronger from day to day. O Thou God of all grace

and mercy, spread Thy gracious wings over my house, and guard it against fire and flood; over my childbed, and let me safely pass my time in it in prayer and in Thy fear. Be pleased to preserve my child for Thy praise and glory, and give me grace that I may in due time with renewed strength of body and in good health attend to my churching, appear in Thy temple, and render before Thy countenance my joyful offering of praise and thanksgiving.

Now thank we all our God With heart, and hands, and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done In whom His world rejoices; Who
from our mother's arms Hath blessed us on our way With countless
gifts of love, And still is ours to-day. Amen.

HYMN.

I will sing my Maker's praises
And in Him most joyful be,
For in all things I see traces
Of His tender love to me.
Nothing else but love could move Him
With such sweet and tender care
Evermore to raise and bear
All who try to serve and love Him.
All things else have but their day,
God's great love abides for aye.

As an eagle spreadeth over
Her young brood her sheltering wings,
So the arm of God did cover
Me against affliction's stings.
He who life and being gave me,
Even in my mother's womb,
From the cradle to the tomb,
He shall ever guard and save me.
All things else have but their day,
God's great love abides for aye.

Yea, so dear He did esteem me
That His Son He loved so well
He hath given to redeem me
From the quenchless flames of hell.

O Thou Spring of boundless blessing,
How could e'er my feeble mind
Of Thy depth the bottom find,
Though my efforts were unceasing?
All things else have but their day,
God's great love abides for aye.

God His Spirit to instruct me
In His holy Word hath giv'n
That He safely may conduct me
Through this weary world to heav'n.
He my heart's dark chamber filleth
With the clear, pure light of faith,
Which destroys the power of death,
Yea, e'en hell itself it stilleth.
All things else have but their day,
God's great love abides for aye.

All that for my soul is needful
He doth carefully provide,
Nor of that is He unheedful
Which my body needs beside.
When my strength cannot avail me,
When my powers can do no more,
Doth my God His strength outpour,
In my need He doth not fail me.
All things else have but their day,
God's great love abides for aye.

When I sleep, He still is near me,
O'er me rests His guardian eye;
And new gifts and blessings cheer me
When the morning streaks the sky.
Were it not for God's protection,
Had His countenance not been
Here my Guide, I had not seen
E'er the end of my affliction.
All things else have but their day,
God's great love abides for aye.

Since, then, neither change nor coldness
 In my Father's love can be,
 Lo, I lift my hands with boldness,
 As Thy child I come to Thee.
 Grant me grace, O God, I pray Thee,
 That I may with all my might,
 All my lifetime, day and night,
 Love and trust Thee, and obey Thee.
 And when this brief life is o'er,
 Praise and love Thee evermore.

The Woman in Confinement at Her Morning Devotion.

EXHORTATION.

If prayer, calling upon God, is to be the daily occupation of every godly Christian, how much more ought a woman in confinement begin and end every day with prayer, all the more since she and her child are exposed to many mishaps during this period. But when she has committed herself and her child to God's keeping, she can the more confidently trust in God's help.

Accordingly, during the six weeks of her retirement a woman should (1) thank God in the morning for her night's rest. If she has passed the night free from pain, she should (2) commend herself and her child to God, that He may guard, bless, and keep them. (3) She should pass the day in happy reflections, and by all means enjoy the rest appointed her with a grateful heart. And if she should still be subject to discomforts, which sometimes occur after child-birth, she should (4) bear them patiently, and believe that God, who has gloriously plucked her out of her distress, will graciously turn aside whatever trouble there is still remaining.

PRAYER.

O God, plenteous in mercy, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I lift up my heart, my lips, and my hands to Thee in this morning hour and thank Thee for the gracious protection which Thou hast afforded me during the night. Thy angel has kept watch at my bed that no harm could touch me. Thou hast guarded me and my child, and hast permitted us this morning to behold with joy the

gladdening light of day. Lord, Lord, how great is Thy mercy, which is renewed every morning! Thy grace has sheltered me: Thy protection has been thrown around me that I have been preserved unharmed. All this is God's doing: it is a work of His love and faithfulness.

Up, therefore, my spirit and my soul, and bless the Lord for all His benefits! Lord, Lord, as at all times, Thou hast been my Defense also during this night. Thou hast kept Thy protecting hand over me; I have learned how gracious, how strong, how almighty, how kind and good Thou art. Lord, Lord, I shall nevermore forget all Thy benefits. I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord, the humble shall hear thereof and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. This poor woman cried, and the Lord heard her, and saved her out of all her troubles. Therefore my tongue shall be filled with singing, and my heart shall thank the Lord; yea, with reverent hands I will praise His mercy.

But oh, Lord, Lord, let me be commended to the fatherly protection of Thy grace also this day. I commit to Thee my body and my soul; preserve my soul and my mind from melancholy thoughts, anxiety, and grief. Let Thy Holy Spirit dwell in my heart, sanctify it, and fill it with heavenly consolation and joy, that I may pass this day in Thy fear, in spiritual delights of the soul, in the love of Jesus, and in filial trust. Restore also to my body its lost powers, increase them every day, and let me soon regain my complete health. Avert from me all pains, accidents, sicknesses, and ill fortune, and alleviate the suffering which according to Thy wisdom Thou art still to lay upon me. Graciously preserve my child, and let it grow and thrive to Thy glory.

O Triune God, I commit myself to Thee altogether. Lord God Father, in heaven, have mercy upon me; be gracious to me and my child; forgive me my sins, bless me, and preserve me from all evil. Lord God Son, the Savior of the world, have mercy upon me; be my Advocate, and plead my cause. Be my Jesus, my Savior, and let Thy grace refresh me this day like dew from heaven; support me, strengthen me, and preserve me. Lord God Holy Spirit, have mercy upon me; pray within me, and witness to my spirit that I am verily a child of God. The Lord bless me

and keep me; the Lord make His face shine upon me and be gracious unto me; the Lord lift up His countenance upon me and give me peace. And the peace of God which passes all understanding may keep my heart, soul, and mind in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

HYMN.

Here's a new day, blessed Jesus,
Wilt Thou take it for Thine own?
In its hours, oh, may I serve Thee,
Looking ever to the throne!

Keep me in the strong temptation
That I may not fall away,
Be Thy love my full salvation
From satanic wiles to-day.

Hold me safe in sudden trial,
Let me know Thy presence near;
Give me grace for self-denial,
Present blessing, Savior dear.

If this day an earthly friendship
Fail me like the smoking flax,
Let my hold on Thee be firmer,
Nor my grasp of heav'n relax.

Wholly Thine, my blessed Master,
Wholly Thine in work or rest;
This day, all days, till the last one
When I lean me on Thy breast.

The Woman in Confinement at Her Evening Devotion.

EXHORTATION.

The two disciples who had had Jesus with them during the day did not like to let Him part from them in the evening, but said: "Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." Luke 24, 29. Thus a woman in confinement, too, should begin and conclude the day with prayer, and for her protection

during the night should ask God for His special gracious presence. (1) She should thank God for having preserved her during the day from pains and mishaps and her child from unrest. But if God in His counsel did send her some suffering, she should nevertheless (2) praise Him that by His help she was able to endure it and has safely reached the evening. (3) Next, she should commit herself and her child to God's protection for the night. To be sure, all mishaps are dangerous and grievous to us human beings, and cause us terrors; how much more to women in confinement, who are not able to escape from danger, and too weak to undergo many hardships. (4) After praying, she should finally fall asleep in the arms and lap of her kind God, without entertaining any thoughts of a bad night, cares, worries, fears, or terrors, and on awaking she should think of God, rejoice in Him, and consecrate herself to Him.

PRAYER.

O Lord, almighty God, how am I to praise Thee sufficiently for Thy love and faithfulness manifested towards me this day? This day, too, I have safely passed under Thy protection and have reached the evening with a contented heart. Thou hast helped me bear and overcome the pains and discomforts of my condition. Thou hast been to me and my child a gracious Father, a protecting God and Defender. O Lord, I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me. Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness, to the end that my glory may sing praises to Thee, and not be silent. O Lord, my God, I will give thanks unto Thee forever.

However, after covering me mercifully with the wings of Thy grace during this day, spread Thy loving-kindness over me also during this night: guard me, my house, and all my dear ones against calamity, danger, and harm. Mercifully forgive all that I have done this day in thoughts, words, and deeds contrary to Thee. I will now lay me down in Thy arms, O Thou God of all grace and mercy, and will say: I will both lay me down in peace and sleep; for Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety. Command Thy angel that he come and keep watch over Thine own. Place us under the care of all Thy ministering spirits, that we may be secure against the wiles of Satan. Yes, in Thy name, O great God, I will now close my eyes and go to sleep: do Thou watch over my slumbers and drive from me whatever might disturb my rest.

But while my body sleeps, my spirit shall be ever wakeful as in Thy presence, and delight itself in Thee. Lord God Father, let Thy fatherly heart be open to me this night, that even in my sleep I may rejoice in Thy almighty power, goodness, love, and mercy. Lord Jesus, Thou Light of my soul, illumine me also this night with the heavenly light of Thy mercy, that I may find comfort in Thy wounds and blood, may cherish in my heart the precious image of my Savior, and thus fall asleep. O precious Holy Spirit, quicken in me holy desires; sing and pray in my heart, and seal to me the comfort that I am a child of God. O Triune God, let me thus go to sleep in Thy love, rest peacefully in Thy mercy, and on awaking find myself still with Thee. Let me behold the light of the morning in health and good cheer, and return thanks to Thee, and praise and extol Thee for all the benefits Thou hast shown to me and my beloved ones in body and soul. May the grace of the Father protect me, the love of Jesus cover me, the succor of the Holy Spirit strengthen and sustain me!

The happy sunshine now is gone, The gloomy night comes swiftly on; But shine Thou still, O Christ, our Light, Nor let us lose ourselves in night. Amen.

HYMN.

Night's shadows falling men to rest are calling;
Rest we, possessing heav'nly peace and blessing:
This we implore Thee, falling down before Thee,
Great King of Glory.

O Savior, hear us! Son of God, be near us!
Thine angels send us; let Thy love attend us;
He nothing feareth whom Thy presence cheereth,
Light his path cleareth.

Be near, relieving all who now are grieving;
Thy visitation be our consolation:
Oh, hear the sighing of the faint and dying;
Lord, hear our crying!

Thou ever livest; endless life Thou givest;
Thou watch art keeping o'er Thy faithful sleeping;
In Thy clear shining they are now reclining,
All care resigning.

O Lord of Glory, praise we and adore Thee —
Thee for us given, one true Rest from heaven!
Rest, peace, and blessing, we are now possessing,
Thy name confessing.

The Woman in Confinement Presents Her Child to God in Prayer.

EXHORTATION.

When God has given parents children, not only cares for them begin, but there is also found in parents a love for their children's salvation here and hereafter and a desire for their well-being. But all these blessings must be obtained from God by prayer, because they are among the good gifts which come down from above, from the Father of lights.

Accordingly, (1) a godly mother should humbly commend her new-born babe to God, and pray Him to let it obtain Holy Baptism, and through this Sacrament be received into His arms as His child, and into His nurture, care, love, and grace. If God lets the child grow in years, she must (2) remember it in her evening and morning prayers, yea, in her sighings to God during the day, that God may rule it by His Holy Spirit, give the child a godly heart, good health, proper growth and development, preserve its sound limbs, and guard it against misfortune and harm. (3) With the increasing years the prayers and cares of godly parents are also increasing, namely, that their children may be trained and thoroughly established in the Christian doctrine, and brought to a knowledge of Jesus Christ, and they should spare no expense, effort, and labor to secure for their children this treasure. If in later years their children go abroad, or come into contact with the children of the world, the cares of the parents increase again; however, they should (4) pray also more diligently for their children during this period. Godly parents do like Job, who offered sacrifice for his children every evening, and called upon God to be merciful to his children and forgive their sins. Godly parents call upon God to guard their children against being misled, not to let them fall into grievous sins and vices, to lead them by His good Spirit in an even path, and to prosper them here in time and hereafter in eternity. (5) They also have this confidence in God, that, if they have

omitted nothing as regards the good training of their children, their admonition in the Lord, and their Christian education, God will hear their prayers, and that, even if their children should go astray for a time, He will bring them back to the truth by His wisdom. (6) Meanwhile they must patiently bear the cross which God in His wonderful counsel has laid on them through their wayward children, hoping in His mercy until He mitigates its burden or in mercy removes it entirely.

PRAYER AT THE CHILD'S BAPTISM.

O gracious and merciful God, who art the true Father, of whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named, behold, I come to Thee in true humility of my heart and present to Thee my new-born child. Merciful God, receive this blessing which Thou hast bestowed on me as Thy child through Holy Baptism. Oh, let it become and remain Thy child; guard and preserve it.

O Jesus, Thou hast said: Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; behold, to-day I bring my child to Thee. Bestow on it Thy Holy Spirit, that He may regenerate it by water and the Spirit; sanctify it, rule it, and fill its heart with faith and heavenly light. Let it grow up to Thy honor; and give me grace that I may bring it up in Thy fear and for Thy glory.

O my God, herewith I give back to Thee my child that it may be Thine own. O heavenly Father, I place it into the arms of Thy mercy; oh, provide for it and protect it. O Jesus, I give my child to Thee; wash it with Thy holy blood and hide it in Thy holy wounds against all the raging of Satan. O God Holy Spirit, I commend my child to Thy nurture; oh, sanctify it thoroughly, that its soul and body and spirit may be kept blameless until the day of Jesus Christ. Let this day be for my child the day of its covenant with Thee, the day of blessing, the day of its new birth. Grant that it may always be mindful, and that I may often remind my child, of this day. Let my child never break this covenant and forsake its regenerate state, but persevere in faith and holiness until the end, when Thou wilt receive it into everlasting joy as Thy child and heir.

At Jesus' feet my infant sweet I lay with all its stain, That renders it for heaven unmeet Until 'tis born again: I here embrace His proffered grace In this baptismal wave, Nor shall the world my trust efface — The bath its soul will save. Amen.

PRAYER OF GODLY PARENTS FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

O Lord, almighty God, Father of all grace and mercy ! Behold, among other gifts of Thy grace Thou hast also given me children, for which I praise and bless Thee with all my heart. But oh, my God, when I look upon my children as precious pledges which Thou hast placed in my keeping, which Jesus has redeemed with His holy blood and Thou hast received as Thy children in Holy Baptism, oh, I am filled with anxiety lest through my fault one of them should be lost. Thou sayest to me and all parents: Keep this child; if by any means it be missing, then shall thy life be for its life. Therefore, O Father of all grace, I come to Thee, and present before Thee my children. I shall do for them what I can, but the best part must be done by Thee. Oh, bless my children; be their companion in all their ways; keep them in Thy holy fear, that they may never offend and grieve Thee by gross sins, or bring injury and shame upon themselves. Grave upon my children's heart the name Jesus; let Jesus dwell in them and sanctify their hearts, that they may never lose their gracious God and a good conscience. Guard them against being misled by evil company; remind them at all times by Thy Holy Spirit of Thy most holy presence, that they may bear in mind that Thou art with them at home and abroad, by day and by night, in society and in solitude. Let Thy angel go with them in all their walks, and guard them when they are traveling in foreign parts in the business of their calling. Give them at all times Thy angels for companions as Thou didst to young Tobit; rescue them from danger by Thy angels, as Thou didst Lot; let them, like Jacob, enjoy the angels' protection.

If it should please Thee to put upon me a cross through the death, sickness, or misfortune of my children, give me patience in such an affliction, and let me bear in mind that nothing can happen without Thee. Thou hast the right to take from me the children which Thou hast given me. If Thou wilt take my children to Thyself by death, in order that I may be roused to love Thee alone, oh, keep me, while walking this thorny path, trusting and hoping in Thy almighty power, being assured that, as Thou canst do all things, Thou art able also to end or mend my children's cross.

Bestow upon my children also Thy temporal blessing; provide for them, nourish and cherish them, give them food and clothing, and deal with them as a faithful Father. Be their Helper in

danger, their Succor in affliction, their Physician in sickness. Give them a good heart, a good intellect, and a sound body, that they may live before Thee and honor and praise Thee. Give them also an obedient and humble heart; let them grow up under Thy blessing, that I may have comfort and joy in them.

O God, hear my prayer, and remember that they are Thy children as well as mine; therefore let my sighings in behalf of my children ascend to Thy throne of grace, and hear them. On the last day let me with all my children stand at Thy right side, and say to Thy praise: Behold, here I am, my God, and the children which Thou gavest me; I have lost none of them. Yes, my God, grant that none of my children may perish, but that they may enter into Thy glory with me, and I with them,

Never from Thy pastures roving, Let them be the Lion's prey;
Let Thy tenderness, so loving, Keep them through life's dangerous way.
Then within Thy fold eternal Let them find a resting-place:
Feed in pastures ever vernal, Drink the rivers of Thy grace. Amen.

HYMN.

Gracious Savior, gentle Shepherd,
Children all are dear to Thee;
Gathered with Thine arms, and carried
In Thy bosom, may they be;
Sweetly, fondly, safely tended,
From all want and danger free.

Tender Shepherd, never leave them
From Thy fold to go astray;
By Thy warning love directed,
May they walk the narrow way;
Thus direct them, thus defend them,
Lest they fall an easy prey.

Cleanse their hearts from sinful folly
In the stream Thy love supplied,
Mingled stream of love and water
Flowing from Thy wounded side;
And to heavenly pastures lead them,
Where Thine own still waters glide.

Let Thy holy Word instruct them;
Fill their minds with heavenly light;
Let Thy powerful grace constrain them
To approve whate'er is right;
Let them feel Thy yoke is easy,
Let them prove Thy burden light.

Taught to lisp Thy holy praises
Which on earth Thy children sing,
Both with lips and hearts unfeignèd,
Glad thank-offerings may they bring;
Then with all the saints in glory
Join to praise their Lord and King.

The Woman in Confinement Prepares for Her Churching.

EXHORTATION.

When God has graciously preserved a mother during the six weeks of her confinement, has restored her vigor, strengthened her, and guarded her and her child against mishap, so that she may again go to church, her tongue should, indeed, be filled with singing, and she should praise and bless God with a grateful heart. She should (1) reflect how weak and feeble she was lying in her bed, and that God has renewed her strength, so that she can go abroad again in good health. She should (2) consider that other women during their confinement have had to endure grievous sicknesses, have had a period of pain to pass through, have met with mishaps, or have even died. Hence she should with special songs of praise and thanksgiving exalt and bless the Lord, who has preserved her from all these misfortunes. When she beholds her bright and healthy child, she has (3) reason humbly to acknowledge the great favor of God.

Accordingly, she should go to church (4) with a devout mind, a thankful heart, and with lips full of praise. She should rejoice when she enters the courts of the Lord and approaches His altar. Thereupon she should (5) offer up her prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving, praising God and committing her child to Him, and should then receive the benediction and ever after remain mindful of the goodness of God vouchsafed her.

PRAYER.

What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me? Yes, the Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad. O gracious and mighty God, I am about to go to church again for the first time, to thank Thee in Thy temple for Thy gracious help and powerful aid which Thou hast afforded me. Lord God, Thou hast safely delivered me, preserved my life, and permitted me happily to see my child. O God, plentiful in mercy, Thou hast preserved me these six weeks, guarded me against misfortune, and restored to me my lost strength, so that I may now approach Thy temple in good health. O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever. I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place. The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.

Lord, I thank Thee that Thou hast preserved my life at this birth; I thank Thee that Thou hast restored my strength; I thank Thee that by Thy strength I can leave my house to thank Thee in Thy temple for all Thy benefits towards me. O Lord, accept the feeble praise-offering of my lips. I am glad that it hath been said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. My feet shall stand within the gates of the spiritual Jerusalem. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple. O my God, let this going-out of mine be blessed; give me more strength with each day; let my child grow up to Thy praise. I bring to Thee this day a pair of turtle-doves: my grateful heart and my lips singing praise; oh, do not despise my offering. I am offering to Thee in true faith the perfect sacrifice of atonement, the blood and death of Jesus: cleanse and wash me with it. I also offer Thee once more my child, as I have already done at its holy baptism: oh, be henceforth its Father, Sustainer, Protector, Preserver, and gracious God.

However, let the wings of Thy mercy also in the future be spread over me and my child; let us live before Thee and praise Thy name. Grant that I may ever be and remain mindful of this blessing, in order that I may persevere in faith, godliness, and the fear of God, and bring up my children in these virtues. Give to

me and my children Thy Holy Spirit, that He may enlighten, sanctify, govern, and lead us in an even path, until I and my children will enter into Thy glory, into the new Jerusalem, of which Thou art Thyself the sun and the light.

O joy! my hope and trust are founded On His sure Word, and witness in the heart; I know Thy mercies are unbounded, And all good gifts Thou freely wilt impart; Nay, more is lavished by Thy bounteous hand Than I can ask, or seek, or understand. Amen.

HYMN.

O Lord, I would delight in Thee,
And on Thy care depend;
To Thee in every trouble flee,
My best, my only Friend.

When all created streams are dried,
Thy fulness is the same;
May I with this be satisfied,
And glory in Thy name!

No good in creatures can be found
But what is found in Thee:
I must have all things and abound
While God is God to me.

O that I had a stronger faith,
To look within the veil—
To credit what my Savior saith,
Whose Word can never fail.

He who has made my heaven secure
Will here all good provide:
While Christ is rich, can I be poor?
What can I want beside?

O Lord, I cast my care on Thee;
I triumph and adore:
Henceforth my great concern shall be
To love and please Thee more.

A Godly Mother Thanks God when Weaning Her Child.

EXHORTATION.

Having prayed for her child every day, a godly mother renews her supplication when the child is about to be weaned. For it is a great mercy that God has blessed the mother's milk, so that the tender infant could thrive, and that it has grown and become so strong as to be able to take food, and sustain itself without its mother's milk.

Accordingly, a godly mother should (1) thank God that He has let her child attain strength by her milk so that it now can preserve its life by common food. (2) She should especially thank God, if she has herself nursed the child, that God gave her nourishing milk, and added His blessing to it, so that the child could thrive by it. She should (3) call upon God to bless the new food to her child, to let it grow up for His glory, and as it increases in years, to fill its heart with the gifts of the Holy Ghost. And since children about the time when they have been weaned become accustomed to go about alone, a godly mother should (4) pray God to guide her child, to guard it by His holy angels, to preserve it from hurt by falling, to preserve it sound in limbs, and to let it pass under His gracious protection from one stage of its life to the next.

PRAYER.

Merciful and gracious God, my heart rejoices that I have lived to see my child weaned from its mother's breasts. O loving God, Thou hast given me this child according to Thy goodness; Thou hast preserved it amid so many accidents, sustained its tender life, and permitted it to grow, so that it now requires stronger food for its support. Praise be to Thy mercy that Thou hast hitherto blessed to my child its mother's breasts, so that it has gathered strength and has thriven by Thy goodness. Thanks be to Thee for Thy blessing, thanks for Thy protection, thanks for Thy faithfulness and mercy. O Lord, Thou art still performing the greatest miracle every day, when Thou turnest the food and drink in a mother's breast into milk, and givest it nourishing power, that children may be fed, refreshed, and strengthened by it.

O God, now that Thou hast blessed to my child its mother's breasts, bless also the new food and drink to which I wish to accus-

tom it. Grant that it may willingly acquire the new mode of living, and that it may continue to grow and increase in strength from day to day, from week to week, and from year to year. Be with my child when it begins to walk; send Thy angels to be its companions; hold it when it is falling, guard it whenever it is in danger. Oh, let this child be commended to Thee body and soul; make it strong also in the inner man; sanctify it by Thy Holy Spirit, in order that it may willingly submit to training in obedience and in the fear of God, that it may not prove refractory, but, as a godly child, readily listen to its parents and obey them, in order that I may be delighted with it here, and finally take it with me into the eternal joy of heaven, and with it enter into Thy glory.

I'll praise my Maker whilst I've breath: And when my voice is lost in death, Praise shall employ my nobler powers: My days of praise shall ne'er be past, While life and thought and being last, Or immortality endures. Amen.

HYMN.

When all Thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise.

Ten thousand thousand precious gifts
My daily thanks employ:
Nor is the least a cheerful heart
That tastes those gifts with joy.

Through every period of my life
Thy goodness I'll pursue:
And after death, in distant worlds,
The glorious theme renew.

When nature fails, and day and night
Divide Thy works no more,
My ever grateful heart, O Lord,
Thy mercies shall adore.

Through all eternity to Thee
A joyful song I'll raise;
But oh! eternity's too short
To utter all Thy praise.

Admonition and Comfort for the Barren.

When God withholdeth children from married people, so that they say with Abraham: "Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless?" Gen. 15, 2, they should

(1) Reflect that in either spouse there may be natural causes of barrenness; for God does not bestow on all men the same qualities nor the same fruitfulness. If God has not placed this gift in them, they should be content with their condition, and believe that He is nevertheless their gracious God who loves them and is well-disposed towards them. Though a tulip has not as many flowers as a rose-bush, it is nevertheless a pleasant plant to the gardener and the proprietor of the garden. How many shrubs adorn a garden, without bearing fruit, and yet we are glad to have them in our gardens. Thus barren spouses are also dear children of God, though He has not made them equal to others as regards fruitfulness.

(2) They should remember that children are a gift of the Lord. If He withholdeth this gift from any one, that person should not on that account murmur against God, nor grow envious when he sees that God gives to some more than to others. God is the Lord in His house: He dispenses His gifts according to His good pleasure. God has reserved for Himself three keys: the key to the grave, for nobody except God can raise the dead; the key that unlocks the rain in the clouds, for no false god can give rain, and no human being can cause rain; and the key to the womb, which nobody can open when the Lord has locked it, nor lock when the Lord opens it. However, if it is God's gracious will to withhold from married persons the blessing of children, such spouses must give proof of their patience, resignation, and hope in their childless state.

(3) Barrenness is not a sign of God's wrath; for that God is not angry with them the barren may gather from the fact that God does not suffer them to lack other blessings: He bestows on them temporal gifts, such as health, daily bread, prosperity, and other blessings, which He does not give so lavishly to others who have children and whom He frequently visits with much sickness, sorrow over their children, and other afflictions. Moreover, God gives to the childless heavenly blessings, such as joy in God, peace with God, the righteousness of Jesus Christ, comfort, and spiritual

delights. By all of these blessings He proves to them again that He is not angry with them; for a person who is in a state of wrath and disfavor with God must certainly go without these heavenly blessings.

(4) Barren spouses should also consider that God is showing them a special favor by their very barrenness, because He knows the condition of their body and mind better than they do themselves. For although many married wives love children, God may know that they would be too feeble to give birth to a child, or to raise children, or to endure the cross of seeing their children go astray. The child might cause to the husband and to the wife much vexation and worry that might hinder them in their private and public devotions; yea, if God in His counsel should let the child die, that might cause the parents much grief. Therefore, since God knows the strength and weakness of men better than they do themselves, He shows them a special favor by leaving them go childless, although in their ignorance they may not regard it as a favor.

(5) In particular, married persons should beware of trying to force God to give them children by their murmuring, dissatisfaction, and their importunate prayers; for in that case God may give them children in His anger. Either the mother who had murmured will lose her life or health through giving birth to a child, or if this does not happen, the child given her may turn out so ill that it causes its parents innumerable alarms, sorrows, and griefs, and puts them for the rest of their lives in a state of perpetual fear, sadness, and melancholy, all of which would be the results of their unreasonable petitions. Many a son who had been obtained thus from God by unreasonable prayer afterwards became the cause of the father's death and a scourge to his mother.

(6) Godly wives should not misapply the saying of Paul in 1 Tim. 2, 15, where we read: "The woman shall be saved in child-bearing, if she continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." For in this passage Paul does not say that wives shall be saved on account of child-bearing. For we are made righteous before God and saved by the merit of Jesus Christ and for the sake of the blood which He shed for us, Rom. 3, 28; 5, 1, and not by child-bearing. For, if the latter were true, no maiden could be saved, which is contrary to God and His holy Word. But Paul has made this statement to comfort married women, telling them, namely, that although God has laid on them great pains in child-

bearing, because the woman suffered herself to be led astray in Paradise, and thus brought into the world transgression and sin, nevertheless God will aid and help them in child-bearing; they are to be saved despite the fact that in the pangs of labor they feel God's anger, provided in their condition they continue in faith in the Lord Jesus, in love towards God and men, in sanctification of life, self-discipline, and a Christian conversation. Accordingly, this passage speaks comfort to women in labor, and conveys to those who die during child-bearing the assurance that notwithstanding the pains which have been laid upon them on account of sin they shall be saved. But this passage does not declare any cause for the salvation of women.

(7) Married persons, moreover, should abide God's time and persevere in prayer. Some trees bear fruit the very first year, others after several years. Accordingly, godly spouses should not abandon all hope. "Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." Heb. 10, 35. Now, as God does not bestow temporal blessings on all men at the same time, so also with regard to this blessing.

(8) In this connection married people should diligently beware of conceiving a dislike of their spouses, the wife blaming the husband, or the husband the wife; but they should reflect that it is God who withholds from them the fruit of the womb. Gen. 30, 1. Accordingly, they should nevertheless love each other cordially and be content in God, because neither of them can alter matters without the favor, blessing, and will of God. Particularly they should beware of suspicion, jealousy, and disfavor, for instance, when friends, brothers, and sisters are beginning to make inquiries concerning the disposition of the property of childless spouses. But they should continue sincerely loving each other, and whenever this has to be done, dispose of their earthly possessions according to equity and charity.

(9) If God withholds children from godly spouses, they should increase the more in the love of Jesus. While those who have children are often hindered by their children in their devotions, church-attendance, and their spiritual edification, the childless can attend to the service of God unhindered and undisturbed.

(10) Christians whose marriage God does not bless with children should regard the poor as committed to their especial care: they should do good to godly children, clothe them, send them to

school, and aid in their education. Such children will on the last day bless them as their fathers and mothers, and praise them before God, saying: These have clothed us, and given us food and drink. Matt. 25.

(11) Sometimes God, out of love and mercy, does not bless the marriage of Christians with children because He foreknows terrible national calamities and visitations which are to overwhelm a city or country. He removes the godly before such calamities come, and puts His dear children to rest before the storms of affliction begin to blow, as He promised to do for Hezekiah, and as He did for St. Augustine. Now, if this is indeed a great mercy of God, it is also a merciful providence, if God does not give married people any children, in order that they may not behold the misery that is to come upon the world, as happened in the Flood.

(12) Finally, married people may reflect whether they regard children as a natural gift or as a gift of God, which children, in fact, are. If they think that children are a natural gift which they can produce themselves, they are very much mistaken; and by withholding the blessing of wedlock from them, God wants to show to such married persons that it is not left to their choice whether they will have children, but that children are a gift of God, for which He wants us to pray. If Christian husbands and wives should here raise the objection that whoremongers and whores do not ask for children, and yet beget them, I answer: In that case God lets nature take its course to reveal the depravity of men, because such people do not unite for the purpose of begetting children for the glory of God, but to gratify their evil lust. Accordingly, godly wives should follow the example of Isaac, of whom it is written: "And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren." Hence Isaac understood quite well that children are not in every case a product of nature, but a gracious gift of God. Accordingly, the text continues: "And the Lord was entreated of him, and Rebekah, his wife, conceived." Gen. 25, 21.

On all these facts Christian spouses should diligently reflect, and thus guard against impatience and disquietude of mind. They should consider that, though their home is lonely and childless, they will, after their happy departure from this life, be received into the company of many thousands of holy angels, with whom they will rejoice forever at the throne of the Triune God.

PRAYER.

Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless? O my God, I see that Thou bestowest on others the blessing of wedlock in abundant measure, but from me Thou hast hitherto withheld it. Lord, Lord, let me bear this with Christian resignation; let me accept it in patience as Thy gracious will. I know that Thou art an almighty God; Thou canst, if Thou wilt, easily give me children, and make me fruitful. I also know that Thou art gracious to me, that Thou lovest me, and hast never yet denied me Thy grace. Therefore I shall patiently submit to Thy will in this matter: Thou knowest best why Thou hast not yet bestowed this blessing on me. If I am too feeble for child-bearing, too negligent in the training of children, or too readily cast down by afflictions caused by children, I acknowledge Thy goodness, which wishes to spare me and not suffer me to be tempted above that I am able.

But if Thou dost not give me the joy which children bring, let me rejoice the more in Thee, loving Thee from the heart, and finding my pleasure and delight in Thee. Meanwhile, O Triune God, let me continue in faith toward Thee, in love toward my neighbor, and in the sanctification of life; yea, let me walk before all men in decency and uprightness. Let Thy Holy Spirit convince my heart more and more that this is Thy gracious will concerning me, and I shall submit to it with all my heart.

Meanwhile guard my heart against envy, suspicion, impatience, and dislike of my spouse. Let me love him nevertheless, cherish him as I would my child, and love him more than I would ten sons and daughters. If it be Thy will that I should wait a while, and that Thou wilt yet make me a fruitful mother, and remember me as Thou didst Hannah, convince my heart of this Thy gracious good pleasure concerning me. If Thou wilt not give me an heir, Lord, this shall be my heritage, that I observe Thy ways. Jesus shall be the Strength of my heart and my Portion forever. Lord, Lord, Thou canst do all things: Thou didst make Sarah and Elizabeth to conceive beyond their natural time, and it is a little thing for Thee to bless my wedded estate that has hitherto been barren. Lord, let Thyself be entreated by me, and I shall thank Thee for Thy gift to the end of my life, and will raise my child for Thy honor and glory; by Holy Baptism I will give it back to

Thee. Let me not grow envious when I see that Thou fillest other homes with children, but let me show the more love, grace, and mercy to poor and abandoned children, clothe them, provide for them, and take care of them.

O Lord, let Thy mercy be upon us, according as we hope in Thee. Cause us to rejoice; comfort us, help us, and, if it please Thee, give us children; however, not in Thine anger, not for our punishment, not for our humiliation. If it is for my benefit, grant me my prayer according to Thy mercy. But if such is not Thy good pleasure, I shall not wrest the gift of a child from Thee; yea, I will do nothing contrary to Thy holy will; I will not have any children either. Lord, I have poured out my heart before Thee; oh, choose for me what is salutary for me and pleasing to Thee. Grant that I may possess my soul in patience until Thou wilt reveal Thy help to me. The will of God shall be my pleasure While here on earth is mine abode; My will is wrong beyond all measure, It doth not will what pleaseth God. The Christian's maxim e'er must be: What pleaseth God, that pleaseth me. Amen.

HYMN.

Come, ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish,
Come to the mercy-seat, fervently kneel;
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your
anguish;
Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal.

Joy of the desolate, light of the straying,
Hope of the penitent, fadeless and pure,
Here speaks the Comforter, tenderly saying,
Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot cure.

Here see the Bread of Life, see water flowing
Forth from the throne of God, pure from above;
Come to the feast of love, come, ever knowing
Earth has no sorrow but Heaven can remove.

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